

## 1.5 The Dispersion of Ceremonial Objects in the East: The Soviet Trophy Brigades and Nationalizations in the East after World War II

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### The Soviet Trophy Brigades

The trophy brigades set up by the Soviet government to collect reparations mainly from Germany, began their work in territories occupied by the Red Army as soon as the war ended. Yet decrees issued by Josef Stalin for the Soviet removal of cultural property from Eastern Europe and German territories so occupied were few.<sup>292</sup> Shortly after returning from the conference in Yalta, on 21 February 1945, Stalin signed a decree of the State Committee of Defense on the establishment of permanent commissions ordering the Soviet military to remove industrial equipment and materials from Poland and Germany. This set in motion the creation of the trophy brigades. A couple of months later, in June 1945, Stalin issued another decree that dealt specifically with the removal of art collections.<sup>293</sup>

At least five or six different types of trophy brigades representing various Soviet institutions were involved in the removal of cultural property. The main role in the search and confiscation of cultural property belonged to the trophy brigades of the Committee on Arts. The Committee on Scientific-Educational Organizations, for example, was involved in the removal of a broad variety of cultural goods, from library collections to pianos, but they were also removing art works. Archival collections and manuscripts were targeted by yet another unit (SMERSH) which was directly responsible to the Communist Party.<sup>294</sup>

While the trophy brigades' original intent was to search for cultural objects thought to be 'eventual equivalents', this approach was soon replaced by a much broader looting spree: trophy experts started to load entire collections on trains heading to the Soviet Union.<sup>295</sup> The first area affected by the trophy brigades was the eastern territory of Germany,<sup>296</sup> Silesia, which later was to become part of Poland, followed by more territories in Poland and eventually Germany, with major looting in Berlin and Dresden, in addition to parts of Hungary and Yugoslavia. The first major removal took place in March 1945 from the village of Hohenwalde (now Polish Wysoka). Between 1945 and 1946,<sup>297</sup> objects were removed indiscriminately, no matter if they were Nazi loot from Jews or other

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<sup>292</sup> Konstantin Akinsha, "Stalin's Decrees and Soviet Trophy Brigades: Compensation, Restitution in Kind, or "Trophies" of War?," *International Journal of Cultural Property*, Vol. 17, Issue 02, May 2010, p. 195.

<sup>293</sup> Idem, p. 196.

<sup>294</sup> Idem, p. 202.

<sup>295</sup> Idem, p. 203.

<sup>296</sup> Soviet trophy brigades claimed more than 2.6 million works of art, over 6 million books, and kilometers of archival materials from Germany alone. In the 1950s until the beginning of the 1960s, the Soviet Union returned about 1.5 million works to the GDR. For more information, see: <https://www.preussischer-kulturbesitz.de/en/priorities/provenance-research-and-issues-of-ownership/wartime-losses/cultural-assets-relocated-to-russia-as-a-result-of-the-war.html>.

<sup>297</sup> "Tracking the Trophy Brigades," *ArtNews*, November 1, 2007. (Online available at: <http://www.artnews.com/2007/11/01/top-ten-artnews-stories-tracking-the-trophy-brigade/>).

‘enemies’ of the Nazi regime. But the Soviet trophy brigades were not alone: also the Ukrainian Soviet Republic dispatched its own trophy brigades from Kyiv accompanying various army units, competing with those sent from Moscow.<sup>298</sup>

In the majority of cases the masterpieces and cultural objects removed from Europe to the Soviet Union by the Soviet trophy brigades with the aim to compensate for the enormous losses never reached those museums or other cultural institutions that had suffered major losses during the Nazi occupation;<sup>299</sup> rather they were concentrated in cultural centers such as Moscow and Leningrad.<sup>300</sup> It should also be mentioned that among the artworks removed or destroyed by the Nazis were generally no masterpieces, with the exception of the Dürer drawings looted from Lviv and the Amber Room. Stalin’s secret sales at the end of the 1920s and early 1930s damaged Soviet museums infinitely more than the looting sprees by the Nazis. Countries that suffered the most from the Nazis were Ukraine, Belarus and the Baltic states. Major museums in Russia itself were for the most part never occupied by the Nazis.

Among the loot were also a considerable number of Nazi-looted Jewish cultural and religious artifacts; they were as much removed by the Soviet trophy brigades as artworks from famous museums.<sup>301</sup> The subject of “trophy books,” which included confiscated Jewish archives and collections, was taboo during the Soviet period. A semi-open discussion only emerged in the 1990s.<sup>302</sup> Today spoils in cultural institutions of the former Soviet Union can generally be divided into three categories, with the first and third being of significant relevance to this Handbook: 1. property taken from victims of racial and religious persecution; 2. objects taken from museums, libraries, and archives of countries that were allies of the Soviet Union or that fought against Germany, or within Germany against the Nazis; and 3. postwar seizures from wartime enemies of the Soviet Union, especially Hungary, Romania and Germany.<sup>303</sup>

Much of the Judaica that the Nazis had looted in other countries was subsequently brought to the Soviet Union and distributed among its territories, with priority given to countries that had suffered major losses during their Nazi occupation, such as Belarus. Consequently Belarus and its capital Minsk became an important repository for Nazi looted Judaica. In the summer of 1944, when Belarus was liberated, virtually no synagogues or prayer houses had remained intact. Buildings had been destroyed and looted of their ritual objects, interior decorations and furniture, and old Torah

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<sup>298</sup> The Kyiv trophy brigades centered around Dresden and succeeded in airlifting to Kyiv a substantial part of the collection of the Dresden Gallery. Idem, pp. 203 – 204. For more information on Ukraine’s trophy brigades see: Patricia Kennedy Grimsted, *Trophies of War and Empire. The Archival Heritage of Ukraine, World War II, and the International Politics of Restitution*, Cambridge 2001.

<sup>299</sup> Idem, p. 211. Akinsha further mentions that the number of objects removed by the Trophy Brigades was four and half times higher than the quantity of the museum objects lost by Soviet Museums.

<sup>300</sup> Idem, p. 211. [Akinsha notes that “The whole content of museums of Dresden, Leipzig, Weimar, and Gotha, along with hundreds of thousands of art works from public and private collections were crowded in the Pushkin Museum in Moscow and the Hermitage in Leningrad.” The one exception to this was in the Ukraine, where the damaged museum of Kyiv was the main repository of cultural objects removed from European countries, specifically by Ukraine’s own trophy brigades.]

<sup>301</sup> Grimsted, ”Tracing ‘Trophy’ Books in Russia,” *Solanus*, 2005, p. 133. (Online available at: <https://socialhistory.org/sites/default/files/docs/solanus.pdf>).

<sup>302</sup> Idem, p.134.

<sup>303</sup> Charles Goldstein, “Foreword,” *International Journal of Cultural Property*, Vol. 17, Issue 02, May 2010, p. 136. (online available at: [http://www.commartrecovery.org/docs/SCAN%20\(1\).pdf](http://www.commartrecovery.org/docs/SCAN%20(1).pdf)).

scrolls and precious libraries had been ravaged by the Nazis and their collaborators.<sup>304</sup> In autumn of 1945 an estimated 1,200,000 books were shipped to Minsk. Half a million of those books had been looted from their owners in France, the Benelux countries, and former Yugoslavia and found by Red Army trophy brigades in the spring of 1945 in warehouses in a Kattowitz (now Polish Katowice) suburb. Books that arrived in Minsk were, as mentioned, regarded as compensation for the enormous library losses that had taken place there. These volumes are now primarily in the new building of the National Library of Belarus, but also in the Library of the Academy of Sciences of Belarus and the Presidential Library.<sup>305</sup> Collections known to be in Belarus include collections from the Serbian Jewish Community and parts of the valuable Julius Genss collection from Estonia.<sup>306</sup> However, Judaica in Belarus can also be found in for example the State Historical Archive. Throughout Belarus' Communist rule numerous Judaica objects found their way into archival holdings, with the State Historical Archive being only one example of many. Other repositories are the Historical Museum of Mogilev, as well as the Historical Museum of Vitebsk.<sup>307</sup>

While the Soviet Union also encompassed countries such as Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, very little can be said about them. Yet it is known that 100,000 German books entered the Central Library of the Academy of Sciences in Tbilisi, Georgia, in the 1950s via the Soviet trophy brigades, most of which were returned from Georgia to Germany in 1996.<sup>308</sup> More research on this topic in these countries remains to be done.<sup>309</sup>

The situation is vastly different for the Russian Federation itself: Aside from the Soviet trophy brigades, which brought Nazi spoliated objects into Russia, the country's own nationalization measures took a toll on private and communal Jewish property. Stalin's rule after World War II, labeled as the dark years of Soviet Jewry, greatly undermined Russia's Jewish community. Jews were placed in the Gulag or were otherwise faced with oppression. During the 'Night of the Murdered Poets' in 1952, on Stalin's order a number of leading Russian Jewish intellectuals were murdered.<sup>310</sup> Jewish property was nationalized and Yiddish publishing houses were closed. However, nationalizations already had taken place during the early years of the Bolshevik regime. A prominent example is the Schneerson Collection which consisted of some 381 religious transcripts, 12,000 books and 50,000 rare documents that were maintained by the first of five Lubavitcher Rebbes

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<sup>304</sup> Leonid Smilovitsky, "Jews under Soviet Rule. Attempts by religious communities to renew Jewish life during the postwar reconstruction period. The case of Belorussia, 1944-1953," *Cahiers du monde russe*. 2008/2, Vol. 49, pp. 475-514.

<sup>305</sup> In 2011 the Belarus Library published a CD ROM entitled (in Russian) French Autographs in the Holdings of the National Library of Belarus, displaying the title pages of 66 books from Paris with autograph dedications by and/or to famous French politicians, writers, and other cultural leaders, together with photographs of the individuals named. Almost all the names appear on ERR seizure lists. For further information, see: "French Autographs in the Holdings of the National Library of Belarus," online available at: <https://www.errproject.org/looted-libraries-fr-belarus.php>; See also: Patricia Kennedy Grimsted, "The Postwar Fate of ERR Archival and Library Plunder," *Journal of Art Crime*, 4 (Fall 2010), pp. 23-47. See also Grimsted, "Silesian Crossroads for Europe's Displaced Books: Compensation or Prisoners of War?," *The Future of the Lost Cultural Heritage: The documentation, identification and restitution of the cultural assets of WW II victims*. Proceedings of the international academic conference in Český Krumlov (22.-24.11. 2005), ed. Mečislav Borák (Prague: Tilia Publishers, 2006), p. 133-69; and Grimsted, "The Road to Minsk for Western 'Trophy' Books: Twice Plundered but Not Yet Home from the War," *Libraries & Culture*, 39, no. 4 (Fall 2004), pp. 351-404.

<sup>306</sup> Julius Genss was a book collector in pre-war Estonia who amassed a collection of about 20,000 volumes, mostly art history books.

<sup>307</sup> *Descriptive Catalogue*, p. 97.

<sup>308</sup> Grimsted, *Tracing 'Trophy' Books in Russia*, p. 142.

<sup>309</sup> Georgia is the only country with a sizeable Jewish community numbering approximately 13,000. Second is Azerbaijan's Jewish Community which numbers about 6,400 Jews.

<sup>310</sup> <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/vjw/russia.html>, last accessed 2 March 2016.

dating to 1772. After the October Revolution, the collection was seized, and parts were stored in the Russian State Library (former Lenin Library). The Russian State Military Archive holds another part of the collection that consists of archival documents confiscated by the Nazis in Poland during the Holocaust. More recently parts of the collection have been transferred to the newly established Jewish Museum and Tolerance Center, yet they remain part of the Russian State Library.<sup>311</sup>

The *Osoby* Archive (TsGOA)<sup>312</sup>, now part of the Russian State Military Archive (RGVA), was the repository of much of the trophy Jewish archives that were brought to the country after the end of World War II. It received more than 1,350 archival fonds, in addition to looted material from Jewish organizations and parties, including religious and ceremonial objects, as well as material from Jewish intellectuals.<sup>313</sup> Other archives and museums in Russia equally received looted art and Judaica. Some restitutions of archives have taken place, but many more are unresolved.<sup>314</sup> A handful of archival research projects have taken place, among them the projects by Heritage Revealed,<sup>315</sup> a project designed to research and uncover assets displaced to the Soviet Union after World War II through the works of its trophy brigades. Three catalogues emerged from this research project: The “Catalogue of Manuscripts and Archival Materials of Jüdisch-Theologisches Seminar in Breslau held in Russian Depositories,”<sup>316</sup> “Catalogue of Art Objects from Hungarian Private Collections,”<sup>317</sup> and lastly “Manuscripts and Archival Documents of the Vienna Jewish Community held in Russian Collections”<sup>318</sup>. Yet, many more research projects remain to be done, and looted Judaica, including important archival records, as well as book collections are believed to be still in Russian repositories.

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<sup>311</sup> For more information on the Schneerson Collection, see: Patricia Kennedy Grimsted, “Beyond Cold War Over a Restitution Claim?,” *Art Antiquity and Law*, Vol. XVIII, Issue 4, December 2013; Talya Levi, “Russia and the Solen Chabad Archive,” *Georgetown Journal of International Law*, 2015. Online available at: <https://www.law.georgetown.edu/academics/law-journals/gjil/recent/upload/zsx00315000915.PDF>; Paul Berger, “Russian and American Chabad Arms Split Over Schneerson Library,” *Forward*, 3 March 2014; Ellen Barry, “In Big New Museum, Russia has a Message for Jews: We like You,” *New York Times*, 8 November 2012; Olga Gershenson, “The Jewish Museum and Tolerance Center in Moscow: Judaism for the masses,” *Journal of East European Jewish Affairs*, Vol. 45, Nos. 2-3, pp. 158-173.

<sup>312</sup> The Special Archive (Osobyi Arkhiv) was officially established in 1946 to house the archival materials of foreign origin, mainly from European countries. Most of these archival records were captured by the Red Army at the end of World War II and brought back to Moscow. For more information, see: <http://www.iisg.nl/abb/rep/B-8.tab1.php>.

<sup>313</sup> For a more in-depth overview, see the *Descriptive Catalogue*.

<sup>314</sup> For more information on restitutions that already took place, see: Patricia Kennedy Grimsted, F.J. Hoogewoud, Eric Ketelaar (eds.), *Returned from Russia: Nazi Archival Plunder in Western Europe and Recent Restitution Issues*, Crickadarn 2007. See also section on Russian Federation in Patricia Kennedy Grimsted, *Reconstructing the Record of Nazi Cultural Plunder. A Survey of the Dispersed Archives of the Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg (ERR)*, IISH Research Papers, 2011. Online available at: [https://socialhistory.org/sites/default/files/docs/publications/errsurvey\\_total-111019.pdf](https://socialhistory.org/sites/default/files/docs/publications/errsurvey_total-111019.pdf).

<sup>315</sup> <http://www.commartrecovery.org/projects/heritage-revealed>.

<sup>316</sup> Online accessible at: [http://www.commartrecovery.org/docs/catalog1\\_1.pdf](http://www.commartrecovery.org/docs/catalog1_1.pdf).

<sup>317</sup> Online accessible at: [http://www.commartrecovery.org/docs/catalog2\\_0.pdf](http://www.commartrecovery.org/docs/catalog2_0.pdf).

<sup>318</sup> Online accessible at: [http://www.commartrecovery.org/docs/catalog3\\_0.pdf](http://www.commartrecovery.org/docs/catalog3_0.pdf).

## Nationalizations in the East after World War II



Figure 10: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iron\\_Curtain](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iron_Curtain)

The following briefly examines the fate of Judaica in the countries of the East after World War II ended. While much has been and may be written about the fate and suppression of Jewish communities and Jewish life in general during Communism, here the focus is only on the journey and losses of Jewish ritual objects as a result of communist rule. The following overview, divided into two political spheres – examples of countries that were aligned through the Warsaw Pact,<sup>319</sup> as well as an overview of countries that were part of the former Soviet Union – aims to outline the journey of communal and private property during Communism, as well as developments since 1989 and the official fall of the Soviet Union in 1991.

As pointed out in previous chapters, compulsory changes in property ownership and Soviet nationalization measures took place already during the first Soviet Occupation between 1939 and 1941. In some cases, these property transfers were only interrupted by the German invasion in June 1941. Between the end of the German occupation and 1948, a considerable portion of the local economies in East-Central Europe were

nationalized, and the property of former wartime enemies and occupiers was seized by the states. For obvious reasons, the vastly different political approach in the East had a large impact on restitutions that took place immediately after the war,<sup>320</sup> and was in stark contrast to restitution procedures in the West.

After World War II, the political landscape changed with the Soviet Union being firmly established and numerous areas and countries added to it such as western Ukraine and Belarus, Moldova, Estonia, Lithuania, and Latvia. Other countries, such as Poland, the former Czechoslovakia, Romania, Bulgaria and Hungary were not officially part of the USSR, but their governments were loyal Stalinists and aligned themselves with the Soviet Union politically and militarily via the Warsaw Pact. Yugoslavia, while being Communist, did not align itself with the Soviet Union.

Generally speaking, Communist policies in Eastern Europe had a dramatic impact on Judaica objects: Jewish cultural institutions suffered considerable losses,<sup>321</sup> and private Jewish property and communal property was nationalized. In the case of Jewish museums, their only chance of survival

<sup>319</sup> The Warsaw Pact was formed on 14 May 1955 as a military alliance. The following countries were members: Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, German Democratic Republic (East Germany), Hungary, Poland, Romania, Soviet Union and Albania. The pact was dissolved in 1991.

<sup>320</sup> Constantin Goschler, Philipp Thier, “A History without Boundaries. Jewish property in Europe,” Martin Dean, Constantin Goschler, Philipp Thier (eds.), *Robbery and Restitution. The Conflict Over Jewish Property in Europe*, New York 2008, p. 5.

<sup>321</sup> For an overview of Judaica looted during World War II and its current whereabouts, as well as to a lesser degree Judaica that fell victim to nationalization measures, see the Claims Conference’s *Descriptive Catalogue*.

was if they were state-run or otherwise had the support of the relevant regime. Most Jewish museums, however, were situated in disused synagogues,<sup>322</sup> some of which were in dire need of repairs. The Stalinist state doctrine of atheism and antisemitism resulted in local Jewish life being portrayed as something in the past with no place existing for any present-day Jewish communal life.

Today, more than 25 years after the fall of the Iron Curtain, the Jewish landscape is quite different: While historical research and consequently restitutions are still necessary for a number of countries, some countries in former Eastern Europe have seen an increase in Jewish public culture. During the last couple of years a number of new Jewish museums – some of them large, some of them small – have been created in former communist countries, including in Moscow (Russian Federation), Dnipropetrovsk (Ukraine), Czernowitz (Ukraine), Krakow (Poland), Warsaw (Poland), Bratislava (Slovakia), Vilnius (Lithuania), Riga (Latvia), the Bukharan-Jewish Museum in Samarkand (Uzbekistan) and the Jewish Museum of Chişinău (Kishinev) in Moldova.<sup>323</sup>

What follows is a brief overview of some countries within the post-war communist sphere in regard to their compulsory property changes as experienced by the local Jewish population.<sup>324</sup> Emphasis has been given to countries that not only aligned themselves with the Warsaw Pact such as Hungary, the former Czechoslovakia, and Poland, but also to countries that have conducted historical research and for which information is readily available. Some countries that were part of the Soviet Union, namely Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, initiated state-run historical commissions examining not only their role regarding the crimes during the Holocaust, but also during the communist regime.<sup>325</sup> Other countries such as Romania<sup>326</sup> and Bulgaria<sup>327</sup> are only mentioned here since detailed research

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<sup>322</sup> Ruth Ellen Gruber, “Post-trauma. ‘Precious Legacies’: Jewish Museums in Eastern Europe after the Holocaust and before the Fall of Communism,” Richard Cohen (ed.), *Visualizing and Exhibiting Jewish Space and History*, Studies in Contemporary Jewry. Institute of Contemporary Jewry. The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Vol. XXVI, Oxford 2012, p. 127.

<sup>323</sup> See the special issue “New Jewish Museums in Post-Communist Europe,” *East European Jewish Affairs*, Vol. 45, Issue 2-3, 2015.

<sup>324</sup> For in-depth articles on Poland, the Czech Republic or Hungary, please see: Julie-Marthe Cohen, Felicitas Heimann-Jelinek (eds.), *Neglected Witnesses. The Fate of Ceremonial Objects During the Second World War and After*, Crickadarn 2011.

<sup>325</sup> The “Commission of Historians of Latvia” was established in November 1998 on the initiative of former president Guntis Ulmanis and examined the “Crimes against Humanity Committed in the Territory of Latvia under Two Occupations, 1940 – 1956”. Equally Lithuania and Estonia initiated Historical Commissions entitled the “International Commission for the Evaluation of the Crimes of the Nazi and Soviet Occupation Regimes in Lithuania” and the “International Commission for the Investigation of Crimes Against Humanity” respectively (For more information, see *Descriptive Catalogue*, p. 124, 169 and 171.)

<sup>326</sup> For more initial information on Romania, see: Francesca Gori, “Transilvania rossa: Il comunismo romeno e la questione nazionale (1944–1965),” *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Vol. 11, Number 2, Spring 2009, pp. 131-133; Radu Ioanid, *The Ransom of the Jews: The Story of the Extraordinary Secret Bargain Between Romania and Israel*, Chicago 2005.

<sup>327</sup> Information on Bulgaria is mostly limited to the foundation of a Jewish Research Institute at the Central Consistory of Jews in 1947. However, by 1951 as a result of insufficient money for maintenance purposes, the Council of Ministers decided to move the institute into the system of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, first to the Institute of Bulgarian History and, from January 1964 onwards, to the Institute of Balkan Studies. Religious objects, on the other hand, were kept at the Central Sofia Synagogue. Today most of these pieces may be found at the General Religious Council of Israelites and at the Jewish Museum of History in Sofia, founded in 1993 (under the guidance of the National Museum Centre at the Ministry of Culture). During the 1960s and 1970s, as a result of death, departure, but also defection, some of the Hebraica was moved from the Ashkenazi synagogue to the library of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, and in 1980, the collection became part of the Central Record Office. See also Vladimir Paunovsky, “The Bulgarian Archives and the Jewish Cultural and Historical Heritage: A Brief Survey,” Jean-Claude Kuperminc, Rafaële Arditti (eds.), *Preserving Jewish Archives as Part of the European Cultural Heritage: Proceedings of the Conference on Judaica Archives in Europe for Archivists and Librarians*, Potsdam, 1999, 11-13 July, Paris 2001, pp. 114-118.

into their Judaica losses during the communist regime is for the most part still lacking. The same is even more true for countries of the Caucasus (Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan) that were originally part of the Soviet Union and countries of Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan). It can be assumed that the Soviet Trophy Brigades distributed objects also to the Caucasus or to Central Asia, but it is not known if Judaica is among these objects. Comprehensive research is still lacking.

## Czechoslovakia

*Country Facts:* Czechoslovakia, founded in 1918 after it declared its independence from the Austro-Hungarian Empire, existed until 1993 when it peacefully separated into the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Between 1939 and 1945, the country was incorporated into Nazi Germany. After the war Czechoslovakia aligned itself with the Warsaw Pact. A period of political liberalization, known as the Prague Spring, in 1968 ended forcefully when several other Warsaw Pact countries invaded.<sup>328</sup>

Several Jewish museums and Judaica collections existed in the former Czechoslovakia before World War II, with Judaica holdings in many local Bohemian and Moravian museums. Compared to other European countries, Czechoslovakia's institutional Judaica collections were largely preserved due to the Nazis' own wishes.<sup>329</sup> The Jewish Museum in Prague, founded in 1906, is one of Europe's oldest Jewish museums, and the oldest one in what was to become communist Eastern Europe.<sup>330</sup> During the Holocaust, the Jewish Museum functioned as the Central Jewish Museum,<sup>331</sup> with its collection largely being expanded with ceremonial objects, books, manuscripts and archival documents of former Jewish religious communities in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. The Museum's collection encompassed artifacts from 153 Jewish communities that were destroyed during the Holocaust.<sup>332</sup> After the war, it was soon reinstated under Jewish administration and reopened to the public in 1946, although the state had already assumed control of the Museum's assets. This resulted in the fact that the Council of Jewish Religious Communities in Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia – as the legal successor to the disbanded Jewish communities – was unable to take effective control of the Museum before the communist coup of February 1948.<sup>333</sup> By 1950, two years after the

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<sup>328</sup> For a more in-depth analysis of the Jewish Community during Communism, see: Alena Heitlinger, *In the Shadows of the Holocaust & Communism: Czech and Slovak Jews Since 1945*, New Brunswick 2006. A review of the book is available in: Lynn Rapaport, "In the Shadows of the Holocaust and Communism: Czech and Slovak Jews Since 1945 (review)," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, Vol. 22, Number 1, Spring 2008, pp. 120 – 122.

<sup>329</sup> Magda Veselká, "Jewish Museums in the Former Czechoslovakia," Julie-Marthe Cohen, Felicitas Heiman-Jelinek (eds.), *Neglected Witnesses. The Fate of Jewish Ceremonial Objects During the Second World War and After*, Crickadarn 2011, p. 103.

<sup>330</sup> The earliest Jewish museum was established in Vienna in 1896, followed by the Jewish Museum in Frankfurt in 1897. Worms' Jewish Museum followed in 1912, the one in Budapest in 1916 and the one in Berlin in 1933. Only Prague's and Budapest's Jewish Museums can claim to have had a direct relationship to the respective prewar Jewish museum. Under communism these museums were run by state or civic authorities and as such were aligned with the official communist propaganda at the time. In places such as Belgrade, Sofia and Bucharest, the museums functioned mainly as memorial places and were sponsored by Jewish communal institutions. Gruber, p. 115.

<sup>331</sup> For more background information on the role of the Jewish Museum during the Holocaust, see: Björn Potthast, *Das Jüdische Zentralmuseum der SS in Prag. Gegnerforschung und Völkermord im Nationalsozialismus*, Frankfurt am Main 2002; Dirk Rupnow, *Täter Gedächtnis Opfer: Das "Jüdische Zentralmuseum" in Prag, 1942-1945*, Vienna 2000; Dirk Rupnow, "The Jewish Central Museum in Prague and Holocaust Memory in the Third Reich," *Holocaust & Genocide Studies*, 16, Spring 2002, pp. 23-53.

<sup>332</sup> Gruber, p. 120

<sup>333</sup> "History of the Museum", <http://www.jewishmuseum.cz/en/info/about-us/history-of-the-museum/>.

communist take-over, the state seized control over the entire Museum.<sup>334</sup> Only 46 years later, in 1994, was the Museum officially returned to the Jewish community.<sup>335</sup>

During those 46 years, the Jewish Museum in Prague suffered tremendous losses. Expert estimates are that perhaps as many as 158,000 books were removed from the Jewish Museum collections by 1950.<sup>336</sup> In 1964, 1,500 Torah scrolls out of 1,800 and 400 Torah binders out of 2,200<sup>337</sup> of the former State Jewish Museum were sold off to foreign trade companies such as Artia. These scrolls are now partially located at the Czech Memorial Scrolls Centre at the Westminster Synagogue in London.<sup>338</sup>

## Poland

*Country Facts:* Poland had a long history of independence wars to counter the numerous attacks on its sovereignty even before the onset of World War II. The invasion of Poland by Nazi troops on September 1, 1939 also marked the start of World War II. Following the August 1939 Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, Poland was divided into German and Soviet spheres of influence. The pact remained in force until the Nazi attack on the Soviet Union in June 1941. About 90% of the Polish pre-war Jewish population was murdered under the Nazi regime. After the war, the Soviet Union instituted a communist government in Poland, and in 1952 the People's Republic of Poland was officially declared. In 1989, with the end of communism in Poland, the country changed back to the Polish Republic. Two years later, in 1991, the Warsaw Pact was formally dissolved.

Recovering property in post-war Poland that had belonged to Jews, including Judaica, was difficult, in part because many locals combed ghettos and camps as soon as the Germans left in order to enrich themselves. However, there were also instances in which Poles or Polish institutions returned Judaica to their original owners or to organizations, such as the Warsaw National Museum.<sup>339</sup>

Poland was home to much Nazi-plundered Jewish property that was found in the country after the war.<sup>340</sup> German and Jewish cultural assets were regarded as a form of reparations for the losses the

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<sup>334</sup> "(...) this complex and chaotic post-war period culminated in the 1950 takeover of the Museum, including its collections and buildings, by the Czechoslovak State." Veselka, *Jewish Museums in the Former Czechoslovakia*, p. 126.

<sup>335</sup> Gruber, p. 121; Veselka, pp. 126-127.

<sup>336</sup> Michal Bušek, "Identifying Owners of Books Held by the Jewish Museum in Prague," *Vitalizing Memory. International Perspectives on Provenance Research*. Washington: American Association of Museums, 2005, pp. 138-142; Andrea Braunova, "Origin of the Jewish Museum Library Holdings: Origin of the Jewish Museum in Prague," *Newsletter of the Jewish Museum in Prague*, No. 3, 4, 1999.

<sup>337</sup> Veselka, p. 127.

<sup>338</sup> For more information, see: <http://www.memorialscrollstrust.org/>.

<sup>339</sup> Nawojka Cieslińska-Lobkowicz, "The History of Judaica and Judaica Collections in Poland Before, During and After the Second World War: An Overview," in: Cohen, Heimann-Jelinek (eds), *Neglected Witnesses*, pp. 164-165.

<sup>340</sup> On the question of looted books, see: Patricia Kennedy Grimsted, "Sudeten Crossroads for Europe's Displaced Books. The 'Mysterious Twilight' of the RSHA Amt VII Library and the Fate of A Million Victims of War". Prepared for publication in the conference proceedings based on a shorter presentation at the international conference in Liberec organized by the Documentation Centre of Property Transfers of Cultural Assets of WW II. Victims, 24–26 October 2007; Patricia Kennedy Grimsted, "Silesian Crossroads for Europe's Displaced Books: Compensation or Prisoners of War?," *The Future of the Lost Cultural Heritage: The Documentation, Identification and Restitution of the Cultural Assets of WW II Victims*. Proceedings of the International Academic Conference in Český Krumlov (22.-24. 11. 2005), pp. 133–69.



Polish state had endured.<sup>341</sup> These assets included parts of the RSHA (*Reichssicherheitshauptamt*) collection which was found in Lower Silesia and Moravia.<sup>342</sup>

This situation was aggravated by a flourishing private antique trade that existed in Poland until 1950 and a black market for so-called ownerless property. In March 1946 legislation was established by the communist regime that prohibited the export of artistic, historical or cultural valuables. In effect that meant that most of the remaining “post-Jewish” private property ended up in the hands of the Polish state.<sup>343</sup> This included both individual property and the property of numerous pre-war communities, institutions and societies.<sup>344</sup> A legal basis for this appropriation was provided by legislation of 1945 and 1946 pertaining to so-called abandoned property and former German assets that came under state control. The term ‘abandoned’ was predominantly used for Jewish property. This situation worsened in March 1946 with the imposition of a deadline that was set for individuals to file for restitution of private property: 31 December 1947 (later extended by a year). In addition, restrictive inheritance laws (announced October 1947) stipulated that only next of kin could inherit. Given the tremendous human loss during the Holocaust and the chaotic aftermath, this resulted in only a very few restitutions. As Cieślińska-Lobkowitz has pointed out, “there is no denying that the state derived considerable profit from the ‘heirless’ private property of Polish Jewry.”<sup>345</sup> In 1997, new legislation restored the legal status of the Jewish communities in Poland, however movable property is still not covered by this legislation.<sup>346</sup>

Most of the loot found on Polish soil after the war, or Judaica that was not granted an export license, was eventually brought to the Jewish Historical Institute (*Żydowski Instytut Historyczny*; ŻIH). The Institute grew out of the Central Committee of Jews in Poland, established in 1944 in Lublin to supervise the organized search for looted assets. The Committee immediately formed the Central Jewish Historical Commission to salvage cultural heritage and to establish archives, a library, a museum, and a photographic collection. In 1947, the Commission was renamed the Jewish Historical Institute. It presented its first exhibition on April 19, 1948.<sup>347</sup> In that same year, the Institute’s museum had received a significant collection of Judaica found in the Kunzendorf castle in Lower Silesia, among which were three parochot. A year later, in 1949, the Ministry of Culture and Art instructed the Municipal Museum in Torun to transfer 89 Judaica objects to the Institute. Other museums followed suit: the National Museum transferred objects it had originally stored while it was being used as a depot by the *Einsatzkommando Paulsen*, the special unit that had been established by order of the SS and Gestapo headed by Heinrich Himmler to secure artistic and historic objects in Poland. In the following years, even more loot found its way into the Institute’s collection, including Judaica that had belonged to Greek Jews.<sup>348</sup>

Although ŻIH definitely functioned and functions as the main depository of looted Judaica located in Poland, a considerable number of looted objects remained in other museums used by the Nazis as

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<sup>341</sup> Julie-Marthe Cohen, “The Impact of the Second World War and the Holocaust on Judaica Collections in Europe.” Lecture held 24 January 2012 in the framework of The Rothschild Foundation (Hanadiv), Keter: a Professional Training Course for Museum Experts in Ukraine, Lviv, 23-26 January 2012.

<sup>342</sup> Cieślińska-Lobkowitz, p. 162.

<sup>343</sup> Idem, p. 167.

<sup>344</sup> Idem.

<sup>345</sup> Idem, p. 168.

<sup>346</sup> Idem, p. 173.

<sup>347</sup> Gruber, p. 115.

<sup>348</sup> For more information on the Jewish Historical Institute, see also: Eleonora Bergman, “The Jewish Historical Institute: History of Its Building and Collections,” Cohen, Heimann-Jelinek (eds), *Neglected Witnesses*, p. 183-198; and the online *Descriptive Catalogue*.

storage. In addition, museum collections may include Jewish ceremonial objects that circulated in abundance after the war. Some professionally managed museums took advantage of the post-war chaotic situation and purposefully enriched themselves by recovering a good deal of silver Judaica from 'silver scrap metal' that was kept in special depots. The Warsaw National Museum has the largest such collection - of its 340 Judaica objects, over 250 were recovered from scrap.<sup>349</sup>

Poland's pre-war Jewish Museum, situated in Cracow's City Historical Museum, was completely looted by the Nazis. By order of the governmental Monuments Preservation Fund, in 1959 the building was restored in order to house a permanent exhibition of the Judaica collection owned by Cracow's City Historical Museum. And while the synagogue technically remained the property of the Jewish Community, in fact it was rented out for 99 years for the sum of 1 zloty a year.<sup>350</sup>

## Hungary

*Country Facts:* Hungary's current borders were established after World War I and the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. During World War II, Hungary joined the Axis Powers. However, in 1944 the country was occupied by Nazi Germany. Hungary's Jews suffered significant losses during the Holocaust, particularly during the German occupation. Aligned with the Warsaw Pact, Hungary was under firm communist rule until 1989.

Budapest was the only city in post-war communist Eastern Europe with a sizeable Jewish community (90,000). Yet, many of the main centers of Hungary's Jewish life had disappeared or were left to their own demise, including the Dohány Street Synagogue, the largest in Europe and a symbol of Hungarian Jewry.<sup>351</sup> During the Hungarian Stalinist oppression (1949-1956), Jews were not allowed to restructure their institutions, and all Jewish communities were unified under the centralized, state-controlled organization *Magyar Izraeliták Országos Képviselete* (Representation of Hungarian Israelites, MIOK), established in 1950.<sup>352</sup>

Budapest's Jewish Museum, founded in 1916, was forced to close during the Nazi occupation. Its collection was boxed and hidden. In 1947, the Jewish Museum reopened to the public in the presence of the Minister of Culture. Following the destruction of many Jewish communities, the museum curators collected items from congregations that had perished, which resulted in an approximate doubling of the number of items in the Jewish Museum's collection between 1945 and 1963.<sup>353</sup> In 1963, the communist regime appointed a new director who was an agent of the communist secret police. Under her leadership, the collection was re-inventoried in accordance with statutory regulations: as a result, the original order of the collection vanished, with 4,600 objects losing their original inventory numbers, in addition to omitting any provenance information such as from which community the objects had come or when they were acquired.<sup>354</sup> Without these records the objects lost their symbolic, historical, social and cultural meaning and their value was reduced to a merely material one.<sup>355</sup> Likewise, Judaica objects that were considered unimportant and/or of little

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<sup>349</sup> Cieślińska-Lobkowitz, p. 172.

<sup>350</sup> Gruber, p. 115, 119.

<sup>351</sup> Idem, pp. 117-118.

<sup>352</sup> Idem.

<sup>353</sup> Zsuzsanna Toronyi, "The Fate of Judaica in Hungary During the Nazi and Soviet Occupations," Cohen, Heimann-Jelinek (eds), *Neglected Witnesses*, pp. 292 - 294.

<sup>354</sup> Cohen lecture.

<sup>355</sup> Idem.

material value were simply not preserved. In the end, throughout Hungary's communist regime, Budapest's Jewish Museum lost much of its own unique history. Lately the institution has merged with the archives under the title "Hungarian Jewish Museum and Archives," and the museum staff tries to reconstruct this history. Besides the Jewish Museum, the Ethnographic Museum in Budapest and the Hungarian National Museum hold Judaica objects.<sup>356</sup>

### **The Non-Aligned Country - Yugoslavia**

*Country Facts:* Yugoslavia came into existence after World War I originally as the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. In 1941, Yugoslavia was invaded by the Axis powers. In 1946, the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia was formed under Josip Broz Tito's rule. After the Yugoslav Wars in the 1990s, the countries Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Serbia and Slovenia emerged, and later Montenegro and a declaration of independence by Kosovo.

Josip Broz Tito's handling of Yugoslavia's Jewish community was largely different from that of other Communist countries at the time: not only did Tito recognize Jews as a national community, but also as a religious one. Thus Jews were allowed to conduct their affairs freely.<sup>357</sup> Consequently, although the regime in Yugoslavia was authoritarian, it was also the most liberal of all Eastern European countries, and its Jewish community enjoyed freedom both with regard to the organization of communal life and the conduct of religious and cultural activities.

There is not a lot of information available on Judaica that was nationalized from the Jewish Community, its post-war journey or its current whereabouts in the countries that succeeded Yugoslavia. Research thus far has focused on the confiscations conducted by the *Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg* (ERR),<sup>358</sup> the main Nazi looting agency to ransack Jewish communal and private property in Yugoslavia. The ERR's emphasis in Yugoslavia was mostly on the looting of libraries and archival records if they did not duplicate items already taken in France.<sup>359</sup> In addition, Croatia's (then part of Yugoslavia) own Ustashi regime, including its extensive plundering of Jewish-owned property, still requires further research.<sup>360</sup> Likewise, research is still lacking on the PONOVA state agency which was responsible for disposing cultural objects seized by the Ustashi regime. The remainder of those Ustashi-ordered seizures fell into the hands of post liberation Yugoslav authorities and eventually ended up in State collections, government offices, and private hands. Zagreb's Museum of Arts and Crafts, for example, holds many Judaica objects that were looted by the Ustashi regime.<sup>361</sup> Post-war restitutions were rare, with the exception of the Dr. Lavoslav Šik library from Croatia, which was returned in 1959 to the Jewish Community in Zagreb, and since

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<sup>356</sup> The Ethnographic Museum published a small catalogue: Zsuzsa Szarvas (ed.), *Kö kövön. Picking up the Pieces. Fragments of Rural Hungarian Jewish Culture*, Budapest 2015.

<sup>357</sup> On the other hand, Tito ceased all contact with Israel after the Six-Day War; see: Gruber, p. 126.

<sup>358</sup> Report prepared by the Claims Conference "The Looting of Jewish and Cultural Objects in Former Yugoslavia: The HAG Südosten & the Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg in Belgrade, Agram (Zagreb) and Ragusa (Dubrovnik)", June 2012. Online available at: <http://forms.claimscon.org/art/ERR-Looting-Yugoslavia-Oct2013.pdf>.

<sup>359</sup> "The Looting of Jewish and Cultural Objects in Former Yugoslavia," pp. 7-8; see also: Wesley Andrew Fisher, "Restitution of Art, Judaica, and Other Cultural Property Plundered in Serbia During World War II," *Godina XI*, 2014, p. 58.

<sup>360</sup> A fairly recent publication sheds light on the plundering of Jewish property by the Ustashi regime. See: Ivo Goldstein, Slavko Goldstein, *The Holocaust in Croatia*, Pittsburgh 2016.

<sup>361</sup> For more information on Yugoslavia's role during and after the war, see also: Provenance Research Training Program of the European Shoah Legacy Institute Workshop, March 10-15, 2013, Zagreb, Croatia ([http://provenanceresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/PRTP-Zagreb-Report\\_list-of-attendees\\_final\\_07052013\\_bb.pdf](http://provenanceresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/PRTP-Zagreb-Report_list-of-attendees_final_07052013_bb.pdf))

1989 some 7,000 books mostly in Hebrew and other Jewish languages, no further private libraries are known to have been returned.<sup>362</sup> Fairly recent restitutions involved the Geca Kon collection, with parts of the collection being transferred to Serbia's National Library, albeit without consultation of Serbia's Jewish Community.<sup>363</sup>

The Jewish Museum of Yugoslavia, originally founded in Zagreb in 1948, was moved in 1952 to the Jewish Federation building in Belgrade. By 1959 the museum was renamed the Museum of the Federation of the Jewish Communities in Yugoslavia.<sup>364</sup> The museum was filled with artifacts from all over Yugoslavia and already in 1951 the Jewish Community in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as some individuals, were coerced into handing over Judaica pieces to the new-to-be established Jewish Museum in Belgrade. Consequently, the Jewish Museum located in Sarajevo, established in 1965, never owned any valuable Judaica objects and its collection consisted mainly of "third class Judaica".<sup>365</sup> A small Judaica collection is owned by the Synagogue and Jewish Museum in Dubrovnik, Croatia.<sup>366</sup>

## Countries of the Former Soviet Union<sup>367</sup>

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<sup>362</sup> Books, manuscripts and codices written in Hebrew and other Jewish languages which are preserved in Croatian archives and libraries will be registered as part of an ongoing project organized by the Croatian Ministry of Culture, the National and University Library in Zagreb, the National Library of Israel and the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany, with participation by the Jewish communities of Croatia. An agreement between the National Library of Israel and the National and University Library in Zagreb was signed in October 2013. The vast majority of these books and manuscripts were plundered by the Ustashi and the Nazis during World War II. Along with review of relevant German and other historical documentation, activities under this agreement are part of a pilot study to try to determine what was taken during the Holocaust, what was returned, and what is still missing for an entire country. See *Descriptive Catalogue*, p. 112. The National Library of Israel has recently completed the cataloging of the 7,000 books transferred to the Jewish Community of Zagreb, and an announcement is forthcoming shortly.

<sup>363</sup> Geca Kon was the owner of Yugoslavia's biggest inter-war publishing house, and presumably murdered in 1941. The books of the Geca Kon Publishing House were confiscated and brought to the National Library of Austria, from where they were forwarded to four other major libraries in the Reich: the Prussian Federal Library (*Preussische Staatsbibliothek*) in Berlin, the Bavarian State Library (*Bayrische Staatsbibliothek*) in Munich, the City and University Library of Breslau (Wrocław), and the University Library of Leipzig (Christina Köstner, "Das Schicksal des Belgrader Verlegers Geca Kon," *Mitteilungen der Gesellschaft für Buchforschung in Österreich*, 1: 7–19, 2005). All of these libraries have conducted provenance research on their collections and were able to identify many of the books from the GecaKon Publishing House. In 2011, the University Library of Leipzig transferred 796 books from the GecaKon collection to the National Library of Serbia, and in April 2016, the Bavarian State Library restituted its collection to Serbia (see: <https://www.bayerische-landesbibliothek-online.de/kon>).

<sup>364</sup> Gruber, p. 126.

<sup>365</sup> Julia Koš, "Lavoslav Šik i njegova knjižnica. Dva stoljeća povijesti i kulture židova u Zagrebu i Hrvatskoj." *ŽOZ*, 1998, pp. 78-83; Croatia Delegation Statement in Washington Conference on Holocaust-Era Assets, November 30-December 3, 1998: Proceedings. Washington, DC, 1999, pp. 231-240.

<sup>366</sup> see: <http://www.jhom.com/bookshelf/synagogues/dubrovnik.htm>

<sup>367</sup> Much research has been done on the impact of Stalin's antisemitism and anti-Zionism on Jewish life in the Soviet Union, as well as that of his successors. Jewish life generally came to a standstill and Jewish emigration was not granted. By the early 1970s the situation eased slightly with Jews being allowed to leave. However, only with Mikhail Gorbachev's ascent to power in 1984 did the restrictions gradually loosen and Jews were not only allowed to emigrate, but the Soviet Union began to crumble. The dissolution of the Soviet Union was formally enacted on December 26, 1991. See: Zvi Gitelman, *A Century of Ambivalence. The Jews of Russia and the Soviet Union, 1881 to present*, Bloomington 2011; Benjamin Pinkus, *The Soviet Government and the Jews, 1948-1967: A Documented Study*, Cambridge 2008; Benjamin Pinkus, *The Jews of the Soviet Union: The History of a National Minority*, Cambridge 1988; Yaakov Ro'i, *Jews and Jewish Life in Russia and the Soviet Union*, The Cummings Center Series, Portland 1995; Mordechai Altschuler, *Religion and Jewish Identity in the Soviet Union, 1941-1964*, Tauber Institute Series for the Study of European Jewry, Waltham 2012. For an overview of the Soviet

With the Soviet Union's annexation of the Baltic States and areas of Poland and Romania in 1941 and again in 1944, the Jewish population significantly increased by about two million. Jews were present in these areas in almost every aspect of life, culturally, politically and militarily. While Jewish life continued for a while after the end of World War II, it all came to an end by 1948 as a result of Stalin's increasingly anti-Jewish policies. In Vilnius, Lithuania, for example, immediately after the city's liberation from German troops in July 1944, the Museum for Jewish Arts and Culture was founded by two surviving partisans. During the occupation they had been members of the *Papierkommando* which had managed to hide parts of the renowned YIVO collection.<sup>368</sup> In order to avoid a Communist takeover of this collection, they were able to ship some of the Museum's objects abroad, mainly to New York where YIVO was relocated. In late 1948, however, the Vilnius Jewish Museum was disbanded, and its collection was stored in warehouses of the Lithuanian National Library, where it remained inaccessible for over 40 years.<sup>369</sup> More than 60 years later, and numerous political changes, the Lithuanian government returned more than 309 Torah scrolls and megillot that had been hidden during World War II to the Jewish community.<sup>370</sup>

In 2014, the Lithuanian Central State Archives, the National Library of Lithuania and YIVO announced a project to scan and make accessible over the internet not only all YIVO documents and books – both those in Lithuania and those in New York – but also the remaining books of the Strashun Library and other pre-war Lithuanian Jewish collections.<sup>371</sup>

Lviv (Ukraine), like Vilnius, was another important center for Jewish life: After 1918, Lviv (or Lwów or German Lemberg), situated in Galicia, was part of a reestablished and independent Poland.<sup>372</sup> During that time Lviv transformed into one of the most important Jewish centers, and by 1939 Jews constituted 33 percent of the urban population. In September 1939, Lviv became part of Soviet Ukraine, and private property, including Jewish property, was nationalized, as was the case with the

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Union and the Holocaust see for example: "Soviet Jewry and Soviet History in the Time of War and Holocaust," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, Vol. 15, Number 3, Summer 2014.

<sup>368</sup> The YIVO Institute for Jewish Research was founded by scholars and intellectuals in Vilna, Poland, in 1925 to document and study Jewish life in all its aspects: language, history, religion, folkways, and material culture. With the Soviet's annexation YIVO was absorbed into the Institute of Lithuanian Studies and by 1941, Vilna was occupied by the Nazis. Mainly responsible for the theft was the ERR (*Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg*) which plundered YIVO's holdings for them to be used at the 'Institute for the Study of the Jewish Question' based in Frankfurt. Books that were deemed unimportant were shredded to paper mills. At the onset of World War II, Max Weinreich, YIVO's director at that time, had been on a trip outside of Poland, and therefore managed to temporarily reestablish YIVO in new headquarters in New York. Aside from books, YIVO also had its own art museum, which included hundreds of artefacts, as well as religious art and liturgical objects and works by contemporary Jewish artists. After the war, YIVO's printed Judaica fell under the direct military jurisdiction of the American Allies and was brought to the Offenbach Archival Depot (OAD). It was in large part due to Lucy Davidowicz's role as an educational worker for the JDC that the remnants of the YIVO library and archives were restituted from the OAD and shipped to YIVO's new location in New York in June of 1947. For more information, see: <https://www.yivo.org/History-of-YIVO>; Nancy Sinkoff, "From the Archives. Lucy S. Davidowicz and the Restitution of Jewish Cultural Property," *American Jewish History*, Vol. 100, Number 1, January 2016, p. 97; see also: Patricia Kennedy Grimsted, *U.S. Restitution of Nazi-Looted Cultural Treasures to the USSR, 1945–1959. Facsimile Documents from the National Archives of the United States*. Prepared in collaboration with the National Archives of the United States, Washington 2001, p. 46. (Online available at: <https://socialhistory.org/sites/default/files/docs/intro.pdf>)

<sup>369</sup> The collection was not destroyed during Stalinism and in 1988, it was made public. See: Cieślńska-Lobkowicz, pp. 162-163.

<sup>370</sup> For more information on restitutions by the Lithuanian government, see the online *Descriptive Catalogue*, p. 170.

<sup>371</sup> For more information, see *Descriptive Catalogue*, p. 171 and The Edward Blank YIVO Vilna Collections Project at <https://vilnacollections.yivo.org/>; see also: David E. Fishman, *The Book Smugglers: Partisans, Poets, and the Race to Save Jewish Treasures from the Nazis. The True Story of the Paper Brigade of Vilna*. Lebanon, NH, forthcoming 2017.

<sup>372</sup> For an historical overview of Lviv, see: <http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Lviv>.

property of Lviv's Jewish Community. This resulted in the closure of two of the most important Jewish cultural institutions, the community's library and its museum. The library holdings, which constituted around 18,000 volumes, were incorporated into the newly established Lviv branch of the library of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences. The community's museum, which had opened in 1934, had about 5,000 exhibits that were handed over to Lviv's Museum of Arts and Crafts. The collection included various ceremonial objects from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, deposits from synagogues in Lviv, contributions from private donors and other acquisitions.<sup>373</sup> The Judaica collection of Maksymilian Goldstein was handed over to the same institution.<sup>374</sup> Between July 1941 and July 1944, Lviv, was part of the *Generalgouvernement* and therefore essentially a part of Nazi Germany. When Soviet troops reconquered Lviv in July 1944, Judaica was transferred again to the same institutions that had received objects during the first Soviet occupation.

Today, parts of the collection of the Jewish Community Museum, liquidated in 1940, the collection of Maksymilian Goldstein, given by the owner to the museum for safe-keeping in 1941, the collection of the Museum of the Shevchenko Scientific Society as well as the Museum of Artistic Crafts are kept by the Museum of Ethnography and Arts and Crafts. Comprising over 1500 objects, it is the largest Judaica collection in Ukraine and reflects the cultural heritage of Jewish Galicia from the 1600s to the 1930s. The Museum of Religions (formerly the Museum of Religion and Atheism) holds nearly 1000 Judaica objects. They entered the collection from the Lviv Historic Museum, from the Lviv Jewish Religious community and from Synagogues nationalized 1939-1941 in Western Ukraine. 30 objects were added to the collection from the Lviv synagogue that closed in 1962. A coincidental find in Zhuravno in the Lviv region was handed over to the museum in the 1970s as well as the discovery of a Jewish family treasure in Lviv from the World War II era during construction works. The Lviv Art Gallery holds a number of portraits and objects that were described as 'ownerless,' but originated from the Jewish Community Museum, as well as a number of pictures from the former Goldstein collection.<sup>375</sup> A collection of Jewish marriage contracts is also held in the Lviv Art Gallery.<sup>376</sup> The Lviv Historical Museum keeps close to 100 Judaica objects which stem from the collection of Wladyslaw Lozinski and different museums, re-organized under Soviet rule.

The Chernivtsi Museum of the History and Culture of Bukovinian Jews holds around 150 Judaica objects. Most of them entered the collection as acquisitions from private individuals. A small Judaica collection is to be found in the Chernihiv Historical Museum. The objects entered the collection via the former Chernihiv Museum of Worship (established in 1921), which received them from local prayer houses and synagogues closed down by Soviet authorities. A small Judaica collection is also kept in the Cherkassy Local History Museum. Its basis is formed by objects which were transferred from local synagogues to the museum. The Museum of the Culture of the Jewish People and Holocaust History "Mikhail Marmer Museum" in Kryvyi Rih (established in 2010) holds a collection of around 600 Judaica objects which - to a considerable part - stem from various doubtful sources. A number of them might not prove to be authentic. The State Historical Cultural Park "Mezhybizh", holds 20 Judaica objects the provenance of which is still unclear. The Museum of Jewish Life of the Community Center "Thiya" in Khmelnytskyi keeps more than 100 ritual objects, most of which were donated by regional family members.

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<sup>373</sup> Cohen lecture.

<sup>374</sup> Sarah Harel-Hoshen et al. (ed.), *Treasures of Jewish Galicia: Judaica from the Museum of Ethnography and Crafts in Lvov, Ukraine*, Tel Aviv 1996.

<sup>375</sup> Idem.

<sup>376</sup> Vita Susak (ed.), *Jewish Marriage Contracts: Collection of Ketubbot in the Borys Voznytsky National Art of Lviv*, Lviv 2015.

The Vinnytsa Regional Art Museum holds a number of Judaica objects which are mostly neither on display nor researched, whereas the Vinnitsa Nature and History Museum presents a selection of artifacts from the Jewish community of Vinnytsa.

The Museum of Historical Treasures of Ukraine holds a Judaica collection of nearly 400 objects. A majority of the objects had been removed from Ukrainian synagogues and prayer houses in the 1920s and 1930s and transferred to the Shevchenko All-Ukrainian Historical Museum (today the National Museum of the History of Ukraine). Another part stems from the Mendele Mokher Sforim All-Ukrainian Museum of Jewish Proletarian Culture in Odessa (1927-1941). During World War II objects were partly sent to Moscow and Ufa for safekeeping and came back in the late 1950s. Most of them entered the collection of the Museum of Historical Treasures of Ukraine (a department of the National Museum of the History of Ukraine) in 1964. Further, Judaica objects that had been seized by Kyiv Customs were added to the collection in the 1980s.