



POLISH JEWISH FIGURES

Rabbi Abraham Alter (1866-1948)

Known as the Imrei Emes, he was the third Rebbe of the Hasidic Ger dynasty and one of the founders of the ultra-Orthodox Agudas Israel Party in Poland.

Baal Shem Tov (Besht) (1698-1760)

Rabbi Yisroel Ben Eliezer was orphaned at 5 years old and raised by the Jewish community of Tloste. He was the founder of Hasidic Judaism and is known mainly as "Baal Shem Tov" [Besht].

Adam Czerniakow (1880-1942)

Czerniakow served as a member and later a senator of the Warsaw Municipal Council. As head of the Judenrat in the Warsaw Ghetto he swallowed a cyanide pill after hearing of the mass extermination of Jews in 1942. In his suicide note he wrote: "They demand me to kill children of my nation with my own hands. I have nothing to do but die".

Jacob Epstein (1771-1843)

Epstein was appointed a banker of the Treasury Commission of the Kingdom of Poland in 1838. He later became President of Warsaw's Jewish Hospital which he founded.

Rabbi Moses Isserles (1520-1572)

Isserles is known for his halakhic work 'Ha-Mapah', a commentary of the 'Shulchan Aruch'.

Janusz Korczak (1878-1942)

Named Henryk Goldszmit, Korczak was an educator, a children's author and a pediatrician who promoted children's rights. He was the director of an orphanage for Jewish children in Warsaw when it was moved into the ghetto in 1940. Although he could have escaped from Poland, he chose to stay with his orphans and was sent with them to the Treblinka extermination camp.

Rabbi Dow Ber Meisels (1798-1870)

Meisels was a political activist who fought for Polish independence and saw himself as a Polish patriot. He was Chief Rabbi of Krakow and later became the Chief Rabbi of Poland.

Roman Polanski (1933-)

Film director, producer, writer and actor, was born in Paris to Polish parents. His movies include: Rosemary's Baby (1968), Macbeth (1971), The Pianist (2002), Oliver Twist (2005) and others.

Rabbi Michael Joseph Schudrich (1955-)

The New York-born rabbi is the grandson of Polish immigrants to the USA prior to WWII. He has played a central role in the revival of Jewish life in Poland, and in 2004 was appointed Chief Rabbi of Poland.

Berek Sonnenberg (Dov Ber Sonnenberg) (1763-1822)

Sonnenberg was a banker and philanthropist, active in the Jewish community life in Warsaw. He donated a tenth of his fortune to charity, protected the Hasidism and founded the Prague Synagogue.

Ludwik Lazarus Zamenhof (1859-1917)

Zamenhof was a physician who believed that a world without war could be achieved with help of a new international language. He therefore created Esperanto, which was meant to be an easy to learn, politically neutral language that would foster peace and international understanding between people.