

History of the Jewish press of Galicia and Bukovina

Jewish periodicals in different languages played a dual role. They reflected the reality, of both the Jewish community and the society surrounding it. At the same time, these periodicals played an important role in shaping Jewish society as it navigated the modern age in its various dimensions. These publications include newspapers, calendars, bulletins, and newsletters, alongside literary and political periodicals dedicated to topics such as Haskalah (Jewish Enlightenment), Belles-lettres, *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, Liberal Judaism, Orthodox Judaism, cultural and political integration into the surrounding local Polish society and the Austrian Empire, nationalism, socialism, Zionism, Hebraism, Yiddishism, education and educational institutions, politics and political parties, youth movements, social organizations, the economy, and more.

The scope of the periodicals produced by the Jews of Galicia and Bukovina is highly impressive compared to most of the other Jewish diasporas at that time. Nearly 250 titles appeared in the first hundred years of the Jewish press of Austrian Galicia and Bukovina (until the First World War), an era that represents the beginning of the Jewish press as a broad social phenomenon. Many of these were pioneering and groundbreaking publications. In the relatively short period between the two World Wars (when Galicia was part of Poland and Bukovina was under Romanian rule) approximately 400 titles were published in these regions. The initial periodicals published by these Jewish Diaspora populations were mainly in Hebrew and later in Yiddish. As the populations became increasingly integrated into the surrounding society, the publications diversified into German, Polish, and Romanian.

The beginning of the Jewish press in Galicia, and Eastern Europe in general, is usually attributed to the Hebrew-language yearbooks, *Luah Ha-Lev/Tzir Ne'eman*, which Yosef Perl (a key figure in the *Haskalah*) published in his city Tarnopol beginning in 1813. In the early days of the Jewish press in Galicia, most of the publications were in Hebrew. They came out infrequently, once a year or every few months. They usually did not survive very long, and some appeared only once. These were literary periodicals, in the spirit of the two leading intellectual movements in European Jewish society at the time, the *Haskalah* and *Wissenschaft des Judentums*. The periodicals from the first half of the 19th century, in which Galician Jews had prominent positions as editors and authors, and which lasted for at least several years, were actually published outside of Galicia. The most prominent of these were the *Bikurei Ha-Itim* from Vienna (1820-1831) and *Kerem Hemed* from Vienna and Prague (1833-1843).

Beginning in the middle of the 19th century, the Galician Jewish press gradually grew and expanded in terms of languages, frequency of publication, and topics covered, which were primarily news, politics, religion, and society.

Below are some milestones in the development of this press:

1. In 1848, the first Yiddish periodical, *Zeitung*, began publication. This was the first weekly periodical of Eastern European Jewry. 73 issues were published.
2. In 1867, the Jews of Galicia were granted equal rights, prompting the Jewish press to use European languages. In 1868, the bi-weekly *Der Israelit* began publication in German (first using Hebrew letters and later using the German alphabet). It was published by the "Shomer Yisra'el" association, which had a liberal German orientation. Two years later, in 1870, *Izraelita* began publication as the first Jewish weekly in Galicia in Polish. In 1877, the weekly *Zgoda*, which preached Polish-Jewish coexistence, began to be published in Polish by the "Dorshei Shalom" association. In

1881, the pro-Polish "Agudas Aḥim" society began to publish the weekly *Ojczyzna* in Polish, sometimes with a supplement in Hebrew, *Ha-Mazkir Ahavah le-'Eretz Moladeto*.

3. In 1879, an Orthodox association in Galicia, "*Maḥzikei Ha-Dat*", began publishing the newspaper *Maḥzikei Ha-Dat*, in reaction to trends of cultural integration, reform, and secularization. *Maḥzikei Ha-Dat* was first published as a bi-weekly, then became a weekly paper, and it continued to appear for about 35 years until World War I.

4. The last decade of the 19th century saw the emergence of two new movements in Galician Jewry: socialism and Zionism. In 1892, the first Jewish socialist newspaper in Galicia began publication, in Yiddish; *Arbeiter Stimme* was the organ of the Jewish Workers' Party of Galicia. In 1893, the journal *Przyszłość* began publication, in Polish, as a forum for the Zionist movement in Galicia.

From the mid-19th century through the early 20th century, many other weekly publications emerged, each with dozens or even hundreds of issues, most of them in Hebrew or Yiddish and a few in Polish, including:

1. *Ha-Mevaser* (1861-1867)
2. *Ivri Anokhi/ Ha-Ivri* (1865-1890)
3. *Ḳol Ha-'Et*, affiliated with the 'Ḥevrat Shoḥarei Sefat 'Ever' association (1870-1872)
4. *Ha-Zeman/ Ruaḥ Ha-Zeman* (1890-1891)
5. *Ha-Magid* (1892-1903), which moved from Germany to Galicia
6. *Ha-Dor* (1901-1904)
7. *Ha-Mitzpeh* (1904-1921) in Hebrew
8. *Bat Kol* (1912-1919) in Hebrew
9. *Drohobitsher Zeitung* (1883-1914)
10. *Yiddishe Volḵs Blaṭ* (1896-1897)
11. *Der Yud* (1899-1902)
12. *Yudishe Volḵs-Zeitung* (1902-1903)
13. *Yidishe VolḵsZeitung* (1902-1904)
14. *Yudishe Arbeiter Zeitung* (1905-1906)
15. *Der Sotsial Demokrat* (1902-1904)
16. *Das Vokhenblatt* (1908-1918)
17. *Yudishe Illustrierte Zeitung* (1909-1912)
18. *Wschód* (1900-1912) in Polish
19. *Jedność* (1907-1912) in Polish

In 1904, the first Jewish daily in Galicia, *Lemberger Tagblatt*, began publication in Yiddish. It

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continued, in various incarnations, until the outbreak of World War II. There were several other attempts to publish daily papers before the outbreak of World War I, but most did not last long.

Most of the Jewish periodicals in Austrian Galicia were produced in the cities of Lemberg (Lviv) and Krakow, where the two largest Jewish communities lived. The main printing houses of Galician Jewry were located in these cities and there were the creative forces behind the publications. Some periodicals also came out of the cities of Tarnopol, Zhovkva, Brody, Przemyśl, Kolomiya, Drohobych, Stanisławów, Tarnów, Nowy Sącz, Rzeszów, Skala, Stryi, and Zluchów.

In Bukovina, the publication of Jewish periodicals began relatively late, only at the end of the 19th century. They were mainly published in the capital city, Chernivtsi. The first of these was *Ha-Mitzpeh*, published in Hebrew, starting in 1881.

World War I devastated the Jewish communities of Galicia and Bukovina, essentially ending their public life and halting their publications. However, after World War I, the Second Polish Republic was established, which included Galicia, and Bukovina was included in Greater Romania, creating conditions that enabled the revival of Jewish public life in these regions, and allowed them to re-establish and develop their publications, among them their periodicals. These flourished until, as we know, the outbreak of World War II brought it all to an end.

(by Nathan Shifris)

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