tality of antisemitic acts increased, and in 1920 Bernhard Schottländer, a socialist journalist, was murdered.

The situation worsened dramatically after Hitler came to power in 1933. Jews were deprived of most civil rights, and the so-called Aryanization of property began. During the Reichskristallnacht in 1938, the largest synagogue was burned down and Jewish properties were vandalized. From November 1941 to the summer of 1944, Jews from Wrocław and Lower Silesia were deported in 11 transports. The first went to Kaunas, where everyone was shot. The next transports, between April 1942 and the summer of 1944, were sent to the camps of Sobibór, Belzec, Terezín, and Auschwitz. Some Jews were temporarily sent to labor camps. In January 1945, the last 150 Jews were transported to Gross-Rosen, where they were murdered.

From May 1945, Wrocław served as the transit location for Jews returning from Nazi camps in Silesia and Poland. Beginning in the spring of 1946, repatriates from former Polish territories annexed by the Soviet Union arrived in several waves. Wrocław was then the largest Jewish community in Poland; in July 1946, a total of 78,044 Jews were registered in Lower Silesia, including 17,747 in Wrocław. After the pogrom in Kielce (July 1946), the numbers fell considerably. In the spring of 1947, about 45,000 Jews (48% of all Jews in Poland) were registered in Lower Silesia, including about 15,000 in Wrocław.

After World War II, Wrocław contained legal and illegal political parties; the Provincial Jewish Committee; a religious community; preschools, primary, and secondary schools; ORT; TOZ; Jewish cooperatives; and a Jewish theater with its star director Jakub Rothenbaum (1901–1994). In 1949–1950, the state put an end to independent social service organizations, creating instead the dependent Jewish Social-Cultural Society. Emigration resulted in a decrease of the population to 3,800 in 1960. As a result of state-sponsored antisemitism in 1967–1968, the Jewish theater and a school were confiscated and emigration intensified.

A revival of the Jewish community began in the late 1980s, with the greatest contribution coming from its chairman, Jerzy Kichler. In 2000 Wrocław again had a Jewish Social-Cultural Society, a Jewish school, and self-education societies. Jewish organizations in the city now have about 400 members, but the community board estimates that the overall number of people of Jewish origin in Wrocław is considerably higher.


—Marcin Wodziński

Translated from Polish by Bartek Madejski