For centuries, the Jews of Poland formed one of the largest and most creative communities in the world. By the middle of the eighteenth century, before Russia, Prussia, and Austria partitioned the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, over a third of world Jewry lived within its borders. From this community descend not only Polish but also Russian, Belorussian, Lithuanian, and Ukrainian Jews, who gave rise to such diverse intellectual movements as Hasidic and Mitnagdic (anti-Hasidic) Judaism, Jewish secularism, socialism, and Zionism.

Polish Jewry in the modern period produced many of the great works of Yiddish literature, by such writers as Yitshak Leibush Peretz, Sholem Asch, and Israel Singer. In addition, Polish literature in the twentieth century cannot be understood without taking into account the works of writers such as Bolesław Leśmian, Julian Tuwim, Antoni Słonimski, and Bruno Schulz.

All of us have an obligation to study and preserve this community’s history. In the words of the Ba’al Shem Tov, the founder of Hasidism, “Forgetting leads to exile, remembering is the path to salvation.” The goal of our series is to publish works on this important community, both memoirs and scholarly studies, which will contribute to making better known its achievements and important legacy.

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