Pinsk

Pol. Pińsk, Bel. Пінск, Yid. פינסק

It seems Jews are everywhere in Pinsk. Not only the whole town but also the trade of the whole country is thriving thanks to their activity. Craftsmen, merchants, hackney drivers – all of them are Jews, and nothing can happen here without a Jew.

Nikolay Leskov, *Iz odnovo dorozhnovo dnevnika*
(Rus.: *From a Travel Journal*), 1862

The capital of Polesie ¶ Pinsk, the capital of Pripyat Polesie, lies on a plateau, at the confluence of three rivers – the Pina, the Yaselda, and the Pripyat. The date of its foundation is believed to have been November 5, 1097: this is the date mentioned in the old Ruthenian chronicle, *The Tale of Bygone Years*. Next to the entrance to the castle there was a marketplace – the Old Market Square, where the town's main streets intersected. In the early modern period, the town's dominant architectural features became the commercial market square, with its Jesuit monastery complex (17th century), its town hall (1628), and its synagogue complex, as well as the houses of rich burghers, the clergy, and the nobility lined up. The Franciscan and Jesuit monastery complex is an excellent example of Vilnius Baroque style. After 1521, Pinsk came under the dominion of Sigismund the Old, who transferred the town to his wife Bona Sforza (1494–1557), Duchess of Milan, Queen of Poland, and Grand Duchess of Lithuania, for as long as she lived. ¶ In the mid-16th century, Pinsk became a centre of trade in timber, salt, wax, smoked fish, honey, furs, metal wares, fabrics, and craft articles. On January 12, 1581, King Stefan Báthory signed a privilege granting the town with the Magdeburg rights. The economic and commercial significance of Pinsk increased after the construction of two overland routes – Pinsk-Slonim and Pinsk-Volhynia – as well as canals connecting the Pripyat with the Neman and the Western Bug Rivers. The Mukhavets, Berezina, and Oginski Canals served as routes for transporting goods from Pinsk to the Baltic and Black Sea ports.

The Jews of Pinsk ¶ On August 9, 1506, Prince Fyodor Ivanovich Yaroslavovich of Pinsk signed an act granting the Jews plots of land on which to build a synagogue and set up a cemetery. This act is the first written mention of the Jewish community in Pinsk. About 15 families established a Jewish community here. ¶ Jews dealt in leasing various properties (mills, fish ponds, taverns, timber freight), but also in usury, tax and tariff collection, lumber, bread, and potash trade, as well as crafts. The *kahal* of Pinsk was one of the wealthiest in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, but in 1574, due to numerous fires, epidemics, and other
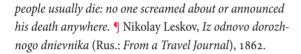
Synagogue in Pinsk, 1929. Photo by A. Bochnig, collection of the Institute of Art of the Polish Academy of Sciences (PAN)

plundered again by the Russian forces and the Cossacks; many Jews were killed. The economic situation of the town became so precarious that the town was twice exempted from all taxes and duties for four years, in 1655 and in 1660. Further tragedies befell Pinsk and its Polish Catholic, Jewish and Eastern Orthodox communities at the beginning of the 18th century, especially in 1706, when the town was captured by the forces of King Charles XII of Sweden. ¶ The *kahal* of Pinsk turned to the Dominicans, the wealthiest money-lending institution in the Polish-Lithuania Commonwealth requesting financial assistance: in 1693, it borrowed 1,000 zlotys from them, and in 1737, 16,630 zlotys. In the late 17th and early 18th century, the Lithuanian Tribunal admonished the elders of the Jewish community of Pinsk and threatened them with expulsion from the Grand Duchy of Lithuania or even to capital punishment if they failed to pay back the debts to the state treasury and private creditors. ¶ The following trade guilds were registered in the town inventory for 1764: blacksmiths, tanners, shoemakers, butchers, tailors, fishermen, furriers and some other craft guilds. ¶ With the spread of public philanthropy, a Jewish hospital was established in Pinsk (9 Zawalna St.) in the second half of the 19th century.

disasters, the Jews of Pinsk requested the Grand Duke of Lithuania to exempt them from all taxes and fees so that they had the resources to rebuild their houses and restore their estates. They were granted the exemption for six years. ¶ At the beginning of the 17th century, the Pinsk *kahal* was one of three main communities of the Lithuanian Vaad. Pinsk and its Jewish community suffered greatly during the Cossack invasions in the 17th and early 18th century. Supported by the town Orthodox residents, these wars devastated the Jewish community of Pinsk. The local Jewish community also suffered during the Russo-Polish War of 1654–1667, when the town turned into one of the battlefields. In 1654, Pinsk was burnt down by the Russian troops, and in 1660, the town was captured and

99 *The Jewish public hospital in Karlin was built and maintained thanks to Pinsk's merchants. There are seven rooms, where sick people are placed according to the nature of their illness.* […] *Doctor Fishkin, a Jew by birth and by religion, was an extraordinarily open-minded and honest man and enjoyed the respect of the entire town. He was known not only as a good doctor but also as a selfless one. His lifetime goal was to serve the people, forgetting about his personal interests. He was the one who originated the idea of building a hospital for the poor in Pinsk, sought to put his noble plan into practice, worked as a doctor in that hospital without receiving any remuneration, and died the way good*

people usually die: no one screamed about or announced his death anywhere. ❡ Nikolay Leskov, *Iz odnovo dorozh-nogo dnievnika* (Rus.: *From a Travel Journal*), 1862.

The Karolin suburb ❡ In 1690, the starost of Pinsk, Jan Karol Dolski, set up an urban settlement in the village of Zagórze and named it Karlin (or Karo-lin). Pinsk and Karlin – this is what the Jews called it; Karlin, the contemporary name of Pinsk suburb, was separated from Pinsk just by Rowecka Street. The Jewish community of Karlin, burdened with less taxes, grew rather quickly: synagogues appeared, a *cheder*, a *mikveh*, and a cemetery were established; stores, granaries, and warehouses were built. The riverbed of the Pripyat was straight-ened by means of a canal, which gave Karlin an advantage over Pinsk: cargo and commodities transported by the Dnieper River were brought first to the quay of Karlin. Karlin began to outdo Pinsk in terms of turnover and residents' income, and the competition between the satellite Jewish community of Karlin and the old and respectful Pinsk Jews took legal, economic, religious and socio-political forms. Particularly since karlin quickly became headquarters of the rising Hasidic movement, while Pinsk tried to protect traditional Lithuanian (Litvak or mintagdic, anti-hasidic) rites and customs. In the second half of the 18th century, Pinsk became the scene of a major controversy between Hasidic followers and the Mitnagdim, opponents of Hasidism. As a result of this contro-versy, the anti-Hasidic leaders of the Pinsk *kahal* forced Rabbi Levi Yitzhak (the future chief rabbi and head of rab-binic court of Berdichev and the famous Hasidic leader), who served a term as the chief rabbi of Pinsk to leave the town while Karlin turned into one of the head-quarters of the rising Karlin-Stolin trend in the Hasidic movement.

A Men and boys in front of the charred remains of the synagogue, holding five Torah scrolls saved from the fire, Pinsk, photo published on 8 June 1923 in *Jewish Daily Forward*, collection of the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research

B The interior of the synagogue in Pinsk, 1921, collection of the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research

If only I could love the greatest of tsadikim as God loves the worst of sinners. ❡ Aaron Karliner

The founder of the Karlin dynasty was **Aaron Karliner** (real name: Perlow; 1736–1772), son of Yaakov, a *gabay* (synagogue warden) from Janov, whose family, according to a legend, directly descended from King David. In his youth, under the influence of his uncle, Aaron, set off for Mezhyrych, where he became one of the favourite disciples of Rabbi Dov Ber, the Great Maggid of Mezhyrych who entrusted Aaron with the mission of spreading Hasidic Judaism in Lithuania (which at that time also included Belarus/Belorussia). The next tsadik of the dynasty was **Shlomo (Gottlieb) of Karlin** (1738–1792), a disciple of Maggid of Mezhyrych and Aaron Karliner. Persecutions of Hasidim by their fierce opponents, Mitnagdim, forced Rabbi Shlomo of Karlin to move to the Volhynian centre of Hasidic Judaism in

Ludmir (Volodymyr-Volynskyi), where the opposition to Hasidic Judaism was comparatively milder. Rabbi Shlomo was killed by a Cossack bullet during the Polish-Russian War of 1792, while praying in the Ludmir synagogue. Posthumously he entered many Hasidic legends. Hasidim believed that Shlomo "understood the language of trees, animals, and birds," and they used to say: "Who can be compared to the holy Shlomo: after all, he is head and shoulders higher than the world." ¶ The next leaders of the dynasty were the descendants of the founder of the dynasty, Rabbi Aaron: **Asher ben Aaron** (1765–1826) and his son **Aaron II** (1802–1872). Asher ben Aaron settled in the town of Stolin, near Karlin, in 1792; after this, Karliner Hasidim began to be called Stolin Hasidim and eventually, Karlin-Stolin Hasidim, as they are known to this day. Emphasising the religious value of physical work, Asher ben Aaron demanded that the Hasidim be diligent in all areas of work and condemned Jews who exploited non-Jewish workers. Denounced by the mitnagdim, who called all Hasidim *karlintsy* (using the name of karlin for all of them), Asher ben Aaron was arrested by the newly established Russian authorities as a "sect leader" in 1792, yet returned to Karlin after his release from prison. Under the leadership of his son Aaron II, Karlin Hasidism extended their influence in Polesie and Volhynia, establishing multiple *maamadot* – groups of volunteer financial supporters of the Karlin-Stolin Hasidic masters. In a treatise entitled *Beth Aaron* (Heb.: The House of Aaron), Aaron II stressed that everyday life, as well as prayer, is the service to God, and

the attainment of spiritual excellence precipitates the coming of the Messiah. Aaron II, as well as some other Hasidic masters, for example, Israel of Ruzhin, provided spiritual and financial aid to the communities of Karliner Hasidim who settled in the the land of Israel. In 1867, he moved to Stolin. In the mid-19th century, the counrt of Hasidic masters in Karlin produced most famous tunes and songs for Shabbat and festival liturgy of that Hasidic trend which are used to-date among the followers of the movement and far beyond it.

Synagogues ¶ In 1506, a synagogue was built next to the central market square in Pinsk, and in the mid-17th century another one was established – a stone Great Synagogue, belonging to the *schneider-shul* (Tailors' guild synagogue). The Great Synagogue was built in the times when the Renaissance style with its pseudo-military elements came to vogue in East Europe, therefore, it has ornaments that made some historians classify it as a defense

synagogue (although it never performed any defense function). It was burnt and desecrated many times, but was always rebuilt. In 1863, there were 27 synagogues and prayer houses in Pinsk, in 1910, there were 35, and in 1940, 43. ¶ Severely devastated during World War II, the Great Synagogue did not survive the post-war socialist reconstruction of the town, and in 1956, the Soviet authorities levelled it. In its stead, the town community centre was built. Other synagogues and prayer houses of Pinsk were destroyed as well. The last synagogue functioning in Pinsk in the Soviet times was the synagogue of Stolin Hasidim, also known as Kitaevskaya (Chinese; the name is connected with the clothes worn by Hasidim, made of satin called *kitaika* – Chinese textile – in Russian). It stood where there is now a busy intersection of Bielova and W. Korzha Streets.

Jewish cemeteries ¶ The first Jewish cemetery in Pinsk was established at the beginning of the 16th century, between Kotlarska and Zawalna Streets

Wooden houses in Pinsk, 1929. Photo by A. Bochnig, collection of the Institute of Art of the Polish Academy of Sciences (PAN)

(Mashkovskogo St.). One of the people buried here was Tzvi Hirsch of Pinsk, the son of the Baal Shem Tov, the legendary founder of Hasidism. The Hasidic cemetery was located in Pushkina Street; it was the burial place of Aaron the Great of Karlin, his son Asher, Rabbi Dovid Friedman of Karlin, and also of Ezer Weizman (father of the first President of Israel, Chaim Weizmann). Both cemeteries were destroyed in Soviet times. At the site of the Hasidic cemetery, a monument was established to commemorate the Holocaust victims murdered in Pinsk in 1941–1943. There is a section at the municipal cemetery on Spokoynaya Street in which the Jews of Pinsk were buried after the war.

Industrialisation in Late Imperial Russia ❡ In the 19ᵗʰ century, Pinsk turned into one of the main Belorussian centres of metal and timber processing and the production of phosphor matches. In the 1860s, about 750–950 Jewish craftsmen lived in the town. The 1897 *Inventory of Factories and Plants of the Russian Empire* contained a list

of 18 enterprises from Pinsk and its vicinity; the directors of twelve of them were Jews. The largest ones included L. Gershman's match factory, tar factory, and repair shop (that boasted more than 300 employees), the factory producing spike heels for Lurie footware factory (180 employees), and E. Eliasberg's stearin production plant (79 employees). The production of Tobal plywood invented by Alexander Lurie was also launched in Pinsk. Lurie was a monopolist of plywood production in the entire Russian Empire. In 1914, 49 of Pinsk's 54 industrial enterprises belonged to Jews. ❡ During World War I, the town was occupied by German troops. Under the terms of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, the County of Pinsk was to be incorporated into Ukraine, but the town changed hands several times: the Red Army, the Polish forces, and the troops under the command of General Bułak-Bałachowicz all took control. For the Jewish community, the most tragic event of that period was the 1919 shooting of 35 Jews: the Polish soldiers accused Jews of the Bolshevik conspiracy and executed them at the wall of the Jesuit college. This execution had a lasting negative impact on Polish-Jewish relations in the region. ❡ In the 1920s, Pinsk industry slowly but steadily revived after the wartime destruction. By 1936, despite the global economic crisis, 13 thriving industrial enterprises functioned in Pinsk; most of them were timber processing plants. Jews constituted the vast majority of artisans and craftsmen and a considerable proportion of physicians, lawyers, and teachers.

> *But I remember mostly the Pinsker blotte, as we called them at home, the swamps that seemed to me then like oceans of mud and that we were taught to avoid like the plague. In my memory those swamps are forever linked to my persistent terror of the Cossacks, to a winter night when I played with other children in a narrow lane near the forbidden blotte and then suddenly, as though out of nowhere, or maybe out of the swamps themselves, came the Cossacks on their horses, literally galloping over our crouching, shivering bodies.* ¶ Golda Meir, *My Life*, 1975

Education and charity ¶ With the opening of the yeshivah (Talmudic academy) in 1632, Pinsk became an important centre of the rabbinic studies. In 1853, there was a Russian state school for the children of Jewish merchants as well as a Jewish elementary school for girls. In the 1860s, a Talmud Torah school was opened, and in 1863, a two-level Jewish state school opened its premises for those seeking secular and Russian-language education. Two private Jewish schools for boys were founded in 1878 (one of them with instruction in Hebrew), and in 1888, a Jewish vocational training school. In 1895, a certain I.L. Berger a member of the proto-Zionist (called at that time "Palestinophile") organization Hovevei Zion, established a *cheder metukan* – a Hebrew-based Jewish elementary school that taught Zionist values. Additionally, there was a branch of the Society for the Promotion of Education among the Jews of Russia (OPE) in Pinsk, a major assimilation organization sponsored by Baron Guenzburg with headquarters in St. Petersburg and public libraries throughout the Russian Empire. ¶ About a dozen schools functioned in Pinsk in the interwar years too: there was a school run by the Zionist-oriented Tarbut Society and a seven-year Midrash-Tarbut school – in 1936 it was divided into two schools with Hebrew as the main language of instruction; there was a private Jewish secondary school for girls with instruction in Polish; there were seven private Jewish primary

A riverside station on the Pina River, 2015. Photo by Monika Tarajko, digital collection of the "Grodzka Gate – NN Theatre" Centre (www.teatrnn.pl)

schools, two schools run by Poale Zion (Marxist-Zionist party), a vocational training school, and a commercial school. The five Jewish religious schools in Pinsk and karlin included three Talmud Torah institutions. In Bernardyńska Street in Pinsk (now Savetskaya St.) there was also a pompous yeshivah "Beit Yosef." In 1888, Shomer (pseudo.; real name: Nokhem Meyer Shaykevitch), the famous author of the exceptionally popular *shund* (kitsch) Yiddish novels, organised in Pinsk a Yiddish theatre. ❡ As in many Jewish communities in the Russian Empire, the Pinsk Jews established a number of social relief and philanthropic voluntary institutions. The major philanthropic *gemilut hasadim* (free-loan society) society was established in 1899. Records show that in 1903, 797 members of this society made voluntary contributions. Until the outbreak of World War I, about a dozen other institutions helped the poor, refugee and destitute Jews: in

1898, the Pinsk Women's Jewish Charity Association was established; in 1912, the Jewish Aid and Loan Association was founded; and in 1908 and 1913, two poorhouses were established: one by the Society for the Assistance of the Sick and Pregnant; another by the Society for the Assistance of the Poorest Jews. From 1914 on, there was also a Society for the Support of Jewish Teachers and Melameds active in the town.

Political parties and organisations ❡ In the 1860s, one of the first proto-Zionist (Palestinophile) groups of Hovevei Zion was set up in Pinsk, with Rabbi D. Fridman as its leader. Towards the end of the 19th century, branches of the Bund and Zionist organisations began to operate locally. Chaim Weizmann, a graduate of Pinsk's *Realschule* and the future first President of Israel, represented Pinsk at the Zionist congresses. ❡ Communist organisations were set up by D. Shlesberg and W. Shklarnik. Other organisations operating in Pinsk included a branch of the Marxist Zionist party Poale Zion and various Zionist-oriented youth organisations such as Freiheit, Betar, and Hechalutz. The Bund activists organized the workers' strikes, and with the help of the Jewish diaspora of New York and Chicago, they opened an orphanage, a number of cooperatives, and a workers' canteen, and evening courses for young professionals.

❝❝ *Most of the young Jewish revolutionaries in Pinsk* […] *were divided at that point into two main groups. There were the members of the Bund* (*Jewish Marxists*), *who believed that the solution to the plight of the Jews in Russia and elsewhere would be found when socialism prevailed. Once the economic and social structure of the Jews was changed, said the Bundists, anti-Semitism would totally disappear. In that better, brighter,*

socialist world, the Jews could still, if they so desired, retain their cultural identity […]. ❡ *The Poalei Zion* (*Labor Zionists*) […] *saw it all differently. They believed that the so-called Jewish problem had other roots, and its solution therefore had to be more far-reaching and radical than merely the righting of economic wrongs or social inequalities. In addition to the shared social ideal, they clung to a national ideal based on the concept of Jewish peoplehood and the reestablishment of Jewish independence. At the time, although both these move-ments were secret and illegal, ironically enough the bitterest enemies of Zionism were the Bundists.* ❡ Golda Meir, *My Life*, 1975

In the 1920s and 1930s, 19 periodicals in Hebrew and Yiddish were published in Pinsk, including *Pinsker Woch* (Yid.: *Pinsk Week*) edited by M. Treibman, *Pinsker Wort* (Yid.: *The Word of Pinsk*), *Pinsker Shtime* (Yid.: *The Voice of Pinsk*), *Poleser Najes* (Yid.: *Polesie News*).

Pinsk, former Rabbi Perlow's prayer house, 2008. Photo by Irina Pivovarchik, digital col-lection of the "Grodzka Gate – NN Theatre" Centre (www.teatrnn.pl)

A stroll through Pinsk ❡ Present-day Lenin Street (formerly named Wielka Spaska, Wielka Franciszkańska, Wielka Kijowska, Tadeusza Kościuszki, and also Grosse Str.) leads to Lenin Square, in which there is a statue of Lenin. Ironi-cally, it was this square that the main façade of one of the oldest stone syna-gogues of Belarus used to overlook.

❞ *The first house on the even numbered side belonged to Moshe Schmit, and it was written down in the history of Pinsk as the "Angielski" ("English") hotel. It is an elegant three-storied house in modern style. The builders left an unpainted-over inscription in Polish, reading "A. L. Goldberg Commission sales." Schmit's house had an inner yard, in which there was Kagan's Clothes and Haberdashery shop, the best in town. People used to say that one could step into it completely naked and leave it dressed and shod, donning a tailcoat, a bowler hat, lightweight shoes, and gloves, with a cane in one's hand, all of these brand new and custom-made. What made the "Angielski" hotel exceptional was not just its furniture and the interior. It had also a telephone in every room, which made it very convenient for business people. And after their business matters were over they could drop in at the restaurants named Ritz and Paradis. The latter was made famous by its "taxi dancers" – ladies to dance with.* ❡ *Schmit's house was also the traditional place where people met and started strolling along Pinsk's first paved street. We are off for a "stroll along the Gas" – people in Pinsk used to say before the war, combining Polish and Jewish words* ["*gas" – Yid.: street*]. ❡ T. Chwagina, E. Złobin, J. Liberman, *Pinsk – Poleskiye Jeruzalem* (Rus.: Pinsk – The Jerusalem of Polesie), Pinsk 2007.

The Jewish community building in Pinsk, 18 Belova St., 2014. Photo by Irina Pivovarchik, digital collection of the "Grodzka Gate – NN Theatre" Centre (www.teatrnn.pl)

World War II and the Holocaust

¶ After the outbreak of World War II and the annexation of West Belarus into the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Pinsk became the centre of the Pinsk Region (*oblast*). Polish-Jewish refugees appeared in Pinsk as early as September 1939, coming mainly from Warsaw and Łódź. According to the October 1939 data, 1,771 refugees were registered in the town, most of them Jewish. In 1940–1941, 385 Jewish families (883 people) were deported from Pinsk to Siberia and Kazakhstan together with many other refugees from Poland, both Poles and Jews. ¶ On 4 July 1941, the German Wehrmacht occupied Pinsk. That day, 16 young Jewish men were shot in the forest. German authorities announced that the executed individuals were in fact the victims of Soviet terror. On July 30, 1941, a *Judenrat* (Jewish town council) was established. Its head David Alper, the former director of the Tarbut Society, resigned from this post after only a couple of days – as soon as he realized that the *Judenrat* had to bow to every whim of the Nazis. Together with several other *Judenrat* members, Alper was shot in early August 1941. The Nazis chose the site of the village of Posenichi

to execute people *en masse* – several thousand Jews were killed there. Another site of mass executions was situated near the village of Kozlyakovichi, where 1,200 Jews were shot. ¶ According to January 1942 data, 18,017 Jews were registered in Pinsk, including 11,911 women (66 percent) and 6,106 men (34 percent). ¶ On April 30, 1942, the ghetto was established. The following streets marked the borders of the ghetto: Zawalna, Albrechtowska, Logiszyńska, Teodorowska (currently: Zavalnaya, Kirova, 1 Maya, Gogola, and Partyzanskaya). According to May 1942 data, there were 18,644 people in the Pinsk ghetto. Several synagogues and prayer houses were in the ghetto area too, and the authoritative Rabbi Perlow provided services and attended to the raditional Jews. A few underground organisations were also set up. One group, led by Dr. Edward Prager, prepared to escape from the ghetto and form a partisan unit. Another group, led by Lolek Slutski, consisting of about 50 people and in touch with members of the *Judenrat* and the Jewish police was planning to set the town on fire the day before the liquidation of the ghetto. ¶ The liquidation began in the morning of October 29, 1942. The elderly patients of the hospital were shot on the spot or at the Karlin cemetery, which was within the ghetto borders. A group of 150 people managed to escape during the execution, but most of them were found and killed. After a search of the ghetto on November 10, 1942, more than 5,000 Jews were shot in the Jewish cemetery on Pushkina St. Only 150 craftsmen were left alive and placed in the so-called "little ghetto." But on December 23, 1942, all of its inmates were shot. In the spring of 1943, in the

Dobra Wola forest wilderness, occupation authorities carried out the operation of burning dead bodies and destroying the vestiges of mass extermination. ¶ About 25,000 Jews were murdered in Pinsk during the Holocaust. On July 4, 1944, Soviet troops entered the town.

After the war ¶ Most likely, only 42 Jews survived the Holocaust in Pinsk. Some had joined partisan units, others were saved thanks to the help of local dwellers. About a dozen people from Pinsk were subsequently recognized as the "Righteous Gentiles." ¶ After war, several hundred Jews who had been deported to the distant areas of the Soviet Union returned to Pinsk. In 1944, they rebuilt one of the synagogues (the one at 7 Pionierskaya St.). In 1948, the leader of the community, Sholom Yuzhuk, applied for the registration of the Jewish community and the synagogue, but a year later, the authorities confiscated the synagogue. Certain Burdo, a representative of the town

Jewish community attempted to question this decision, but the authorities transferred the building to the sports school. Rabbi Aaron Potapovski, who lived in the synagogue building, did not leave it, however, and led the services until 1954. In the 1960s, an unregistered Jewish community of about 80 people functioned in Pinsk, with its own rabbi. In 1966, the last synagogue was shut down. ¶ Jewish life started to revive after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the rise of independent Belarus. In 1992, the Chaim Weizmann Jewish Cultural and Educational Society was founded, and on April 20, 1993, the Jewish religious community of Pinsk was officially registered. On April 10, 1995, religious services were resumed in the reconstructed **Karlin-Stolin synagogue** (12 Irkutsko-Pinskoy Divizii St., tel. +375165324320) for the first time after World War II. In 2000, the only Jewish religious boarding school in Belarus – "Beth Aaron" (9a Ostrovskogo St., tel. +375293643682) – was opened in Pinsk.

In 2014, a new school building named after the Bielski Brothers, the leaders of the famous Jewish partisan unit, was opened in Pinsk too. ❡ A few years ago, the local **Jewish History Museum** (18 Bielova St), was founded by **Josif Liberman** (1947–2017), the head of the Jewish community of Pinsk.

Karlin-Stolin Synagogue (1901–1904), 12 Irkutska-Pinskai Dyvizii St. ❡ **Jewish History Museum**, 18 Bielova St. ❡ Former **"confederate" synagogue** (1889), 109 Kirova St. ❡ Former **synagogue**, 63 Gorkogo St. ❡ Former **Jewish hospital**, 9 Zavalnaya St. ❡ Former **dorm** for the students of the Karlin yeshivah (1920s), during the Nazi occupation it served as the headquarters of the *Judenrat*, 42 Savetskaya St. ❡ Former **Jesuit College** (17ᵗʰ c.), Lenin Sq.; currently **the Museum of Belarusian Polesye**, tel. +375165316646. ❡ **Church of St. Charles Borromeo** (1770–1782), today the municipal concert hall, 37 Kirova St. ❡ **Franciscan Monastery and Church** (14ᵗʰ–18ᵗʰ c.), Lenin St. ❡ **Bell tower** (early 19ᵗʰ c.), Lenin St. ❡ **Palace of the Butrymowicz family** (1794), 44 Lenin St. ❡ **Former Courtier School** (1858), 39 Lenin St. ❡ **Church of St. Barbara** (1786), the former Bernardine church, 34 Savetskaya St. ❡ **Former Kolodny hotel** (late 19ᵗʰ c.), 5 Lenina St. ❡ **Former Warszawski Hotel**, 35 Kastyushki St. ❡ **Former Bristol Hotel**, 39 Dniaprovskay Flatylii St.

Pogost-Zagorodskiy (34 km): a former yeshivah and synagogue (late 19ᵗʰ c.); a destroyed Jewish cemetery; Sts. Cyril and Methodius Orthodox Church (19ᵗʰ c.); a memorial to the Holocaust victims in the "Mała Dolina" ("Little Valley") wilderness, in the forest by the road to the village of Vyaz and in the former ghetto area. ❡ **Logishin** (22 km): Holy Trinity Orthodox Church; the Church of Sts. Peter and Paul with the painting of Our Lady of Logishin, Queen of Polesie (1907–1909); a Jewish cemetery with about 100 matzevot; a memorial at the Orthodox cemetery where Jews were executed.

PINSK