

## Warsaw Polish Uprising

Polish revolt against the Germans that broke out in Warsaw in August 1944. The uprising was launched by the Polish Home Army, the largest Polish resistance organization, based on orders from the London-based Polish Government-in-Exile. Their goal was to take control of Warsaw from the Germans before the Soviet army reached the city, which was expected to happen soon.

The rebels originally consisted of 23,000 young fighters with few weapons who stood up to tens of thousands of well-equipped German soldiers and police. The Poles launched the uprising on August 1. On August 4 the rebels freed hundreds of Greek and Hungarian Jews imprisoned at the CONCENTRATION CAMP on Gensia Street; the prisoners immediately joined the uprising. Members of the Jewish Fighting Organization (ZOB) who had survived the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising also took part in the fighting. The civilian citizens of Warsaw were very supportive of the rebels: they published rebel newspapers, supplied first aid to the fighters, and organized mail services and supplies. On August 5 the German troops, heavily reinforced, began a counterattack and soon put the city center under siege.

On September 14 Polish army units that had parachuted into Warsaw took control of the right bank of the Vistula River; they also managed to transfer several battalions to the left bank, suffering heavy casualties. Despite their efforts, though, they could not help the rebels. The city center fell to the Germans on October 2, signaling the end of the Warsaw Polish Uprising.

In all, about 16,000-20,000 Polish fighters were either killed or went missing and 7,000 were wounded. Approximately 150,000 civilians were also killed, including several thousand Jews who had hidden with Poles in Warsaw after the ghetto was liquidated in May 1943. About 16,000 German soldiers were killed or went missing and 9,000 were wounded. Most of Warsaw's surviving civilians were deported by the Germans to nearby camps, and 65,000 were soon transferred to concentration camps. About 100,000 were taken to do forced labor in the Reich, while the rest were spread out over the *Generalgouvernement*. The Germans burned and destroyed those parts of



Warsaw that were still standing, including many of Poland's cultural and spiritual treasures. (see also Jewish Fighting Organization, Warsaw.)