

FOUNDATION FOR  
THE PRESERVATION  
OF JEWISH HERITAGE  
IN POLAND



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FUNDACJA  
OCHRONY  
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ŻYDOWSKIEGO



# Zamość

THE CHASSIDIC ROUTE



**Foundation for the Preservation of Jewish Heritage in Poland** was established in March 2002 by the Union of Jewish Communities in Poland and the World Jewish Restitution Organization (WJRO).

Our mission is to protect and commemorate the surviving monuments of Jewish cultural heritage in Poland. The priority of our Foundation is the protection of the Jewish cemeteries: in cooperation with other organizations and private donors we saved from destruction, fenced and commemorated several of them (e.g. in Zakopane, Kozienice, Mszczonów, Kłodzko, Iwaniska, Strzegowo, Dubienka, Kolno, Iłża, Wysokie Mazowieckie). The actions of our Foundation cover also the revitalization of particularly important and valuable landmarks of Jewish heritage, e.g. the synagogues in Zamość, Rymanów and Kraśnik.

We do not limit our heritage preservation activities only to the protection of objects. It is equally important for us to broaden the public's knowledge about the history of Jews who for centuries contributed to cultural heritage of Poland.

One of the most important educational activities of our Foundation is the "To Bring Memory Back" program ([www.pamiec.fodz.pl](http://www.pamiec.fodz.pl)) directed to students, with over 130 schools from all around Poland participating in it, and the multimedia Internet portal POLIN – Polish Jews Heritage ([www.polin.org.pl](http://www.polin.org.pl)), meant to present the history of the Jewish communities from 1,200 places in the country.

One of the major undertakings by the Foundation is the Chassidic Route project.

More information about the Foundation for the Preservation of Jewish Heritage in Poland:

[www.fodz.pl](http://www.fodz.pl)

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[www.polin.org.pl](http://www.polin.org.pl)

Dear Sirs,

This publication is dedicated to the history of the Jewish community of **Zamość** and is a part of a series of pamphlets presenting history of Jews in the localities participating in the Chassidic Route project, run by the Foundation for the Preservation of Jewish Heritage in Poland since 2005.

The Chassidic Route is a tourist route which follows the traces of Jews from southeastern Poland and, soon, from western Ukraine. 20 communities, which have already joined the project and where the priceless traces of the centuries-old Jewish presence have survived, are: Baligród, Biłgoraj, Chełm, Cieszanów, Dębica, Dynów, Jarosław, Kraśnik, Lesko, Leżajsk (Lizhensk), Lublin, Przemyśl, Ropczyce, Rymanów, Sanok, Tarnobrzeg, Ustrzyki Dolne, Wielkie Oczy, Włodawa and Zamość.

The Chassidic Route runs through picturesque areas of southeastern Poland, like the Roztocze Hills and the Bieszczady Mountains, and joins localities, where one can find imposing synagogues and Jewish cemeteries with gravestones dating back to the 18<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> or even 16<sup>th</sup> century. Many of those cemeteries are still visited by the Chassidim from all over the world.

Within the frames of the Chassidic Route project the Foundation for the Preservation of Jewish Heritage in Poland supports local authorities and non-governmental organizations to protect and promote multicultural heritage of their communities. It also stimulates establishing firm partnership between sectors in favor of the development of profiled tourism, based on Jewish cultural heritage.

The Chassidic Route gives many places the opportunity to appear on the map of tourist attractions of Poland; apart from well-known Zamość, placed on the UNESCO list of World Heritage Sites, there are many places on the Route, which are often omitted by tourists, unaware of their attractions.

We cordially invite you to join us on the Chassidic Route!

Monika Krawczyk | CEO





## Why the “Chassidic Route”?

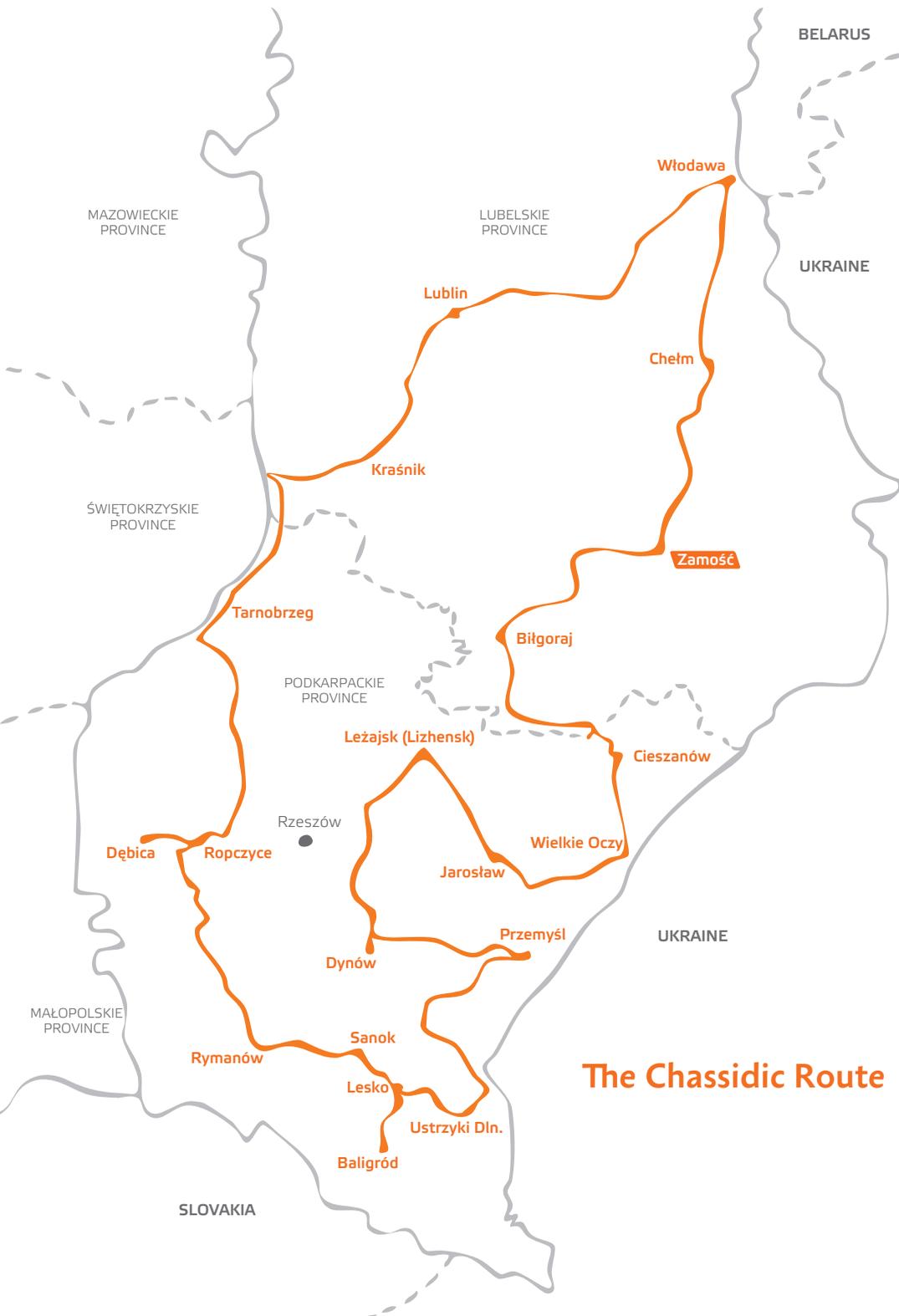
For centuries Poland used to be the homeland to many generations of Jews. An unprecedented development of Jewish culture, as well as religious thought and writing, took place in this country. Here in the 18<sup>th</sup> c. emerged Chassidism, one of the most important currents in Judaism ever. It gained particularly many supporters in eastern Poland, among others on the territories through which the Chassidic Route runs today.

It is traditionally believed that the creator of Chassidism (*chassid* stands in Hebrew for “pious”) was Israel Ben Eliezer of Międzybóž (Medzhybizh) in the Podolia region (today in Ukraine), known as the Baal Shem Tov. The Chassidim believed that religiousness could not be limited only to strict observing of orders and bans of Judaism, and even that obeying of them in a too restrictive way could distance the man from God. Therefore they strongly emphasized the spiritual dimension of religion and the emotional experience of faith.

The Chassidim gathered around the *tzadikim* (*tzadik* stands in Hebrew for “righteous”), charismatic spiritual leaders, each of whom proposed a special way of coming closer to God, concrete methods of studying of the Torah and other religious writings, as well as celebrating of rituals. In the 19<sup>th</sup> c. the rank of a *tzadik* became hereditary, which led to establishing entire dynasties of the *tzadikim*, taking their names from the towns, where their courts were located.

On an anniversary of death of a *tzadik* (*yortzeit*), the Chassidim gather around his grave with belief that on such a day the soul the *tzadik* visits the place. They pray and leave at the grave *kvitlech*, small pieces of paper with written requests. This tradition is still vivid and the Chassidim from all around the world still come to the graves of *tzadikim* in Lizhensk, Lublin, Dynów, Ropczyce or Rymanów.

There were courts of *tzadikim* in Cieszanów, Dębica, Dynów, Lesko, Leżajsk (Lizhensk), Lublin, Przemyśl, Ropczyce, Rymanów and Tarnobrzeg (or, more precisely, in nearby Dzików). The most important center of Chassidism in Poland was Lizhensk, where the famous *Tzadik Elimelech* lived. In other localities of the Route only small groups of the Chassidim, affiliated to *tzadikim* from other towns and villages, used to live. This, however, does not downgrade the appeal of the relics of Jewish heritage located there.



## The Chassidic Route – Places of Interest:

**BALIGRÓD** – a cemetery established at the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> c.

**BIŁGORAJ** – a cemetery established in the 19<sup>th</sup> c.

**CHEŁM** – a so called “new synagogue” from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> c.; a cemetery established in the 15<sup>th</sup> c., one of the oldest surviving Jewish cemeteries in Europe.

**CIESZANÓW** – a synagogue from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> c.; a cemetery established in the 19<sup>th</sup> c.

**DĘBICA** – a synagogue erected probably at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> c.; a cemetery established at the turn of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> c.

**DYNÓW** – a cemetery from the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> c. with the grave of Tzadik Zvi Elimelech Shapiro of Dynów (1785–1841).

**JAROSŁAW** – two synagogues from the 19<sup>th</sup> c. and a cemetery established at the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> c.

**KRAŚNIK** – a complex of two synagogues from the 17<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> c.; a so called “new cemetery” established around 1850.

**LESKO** – a synagogue erected in the 17<sup>th</sup> c. and a cemetery from the 16<sup>th</sup> c., one of the oldest surviving Jewish cemeteries in Europe.

**LEŻAJSK (LIZHENSK)** – a cemetery established in the 17<sup>th</sup> c. with the grave of Tzadik Elimelech of Lizhensk (1717–1787), a place of pilgrimages of the Chassidim from all over the world.

**LUBLIN** – the Chachmey Lublin Yeshiva (the School of the Wise Men of Lublin) erected in 1930 as the biggest Jewish religious school in the world; a so called “old cemetery” established in the 16<sup>th</sup> c., with the grave of Tzadik Jacob Isaac Horovitz, called “The Seer of Lublin” (1745–1815); a so called “new cemetery” established at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> c.

**PRZEMYŚL** – a so called “new synagogue” erected at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> c.; a so called “new cemetery” established at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> c., the biggest Jewish cemetery in Podkarpackie province.

**ROP CZYCE** – a cemetery established in the 18<sup>th</sup> c.

**RYMANÓW** – a Baroque synagogue and a cemetery with the grave of Tzadik Menachem Mendel of Rymanów (1745–1815).

**SANOK** – a synagogue erected in the 1920’s; a so called “new cemetery” established in the 19<sup>th</sup> c.

**TARNOBZEG** – a cemetery established at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> c. with the grave of Tzadik Eliezer Horovitz of Dzików.

**USTRZYKI DOLNE** – a cemetery established in the 18<sup>th</sup> c.

**WIELKIE OCZY** – a synagogue from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> c.; a cemetery established in the 18<sup>th</sup> c.

**WŁODAWA** – a Baroque synagogue complex from the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> c.

**ZAMOŚĆ** – a famous Renaissance synagogue erected at the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> c.; a so called “new cemetery” established in 1907.



„The air of Zamość makes one wise.”

Dawid Szyfman, *Ode to Zamość*

Zamość is a town located in Lubelskie province and is inhabited by almost 70,000 people. It was founded in 1580 by the Hetman and Grand Chancellor of the Crown Jan Zamoyski as a Renaissance “ideal city”, designed by an Italian architect Bernardo Morando. In 1992 the urban complex of the Old City (Stare Miasto) quarter of Zamość was placed on the UNESCO list of World Heritage Sites.

### First Jews in Zamość

When Jan Zamoyski issued the founding decree of Zamość, there was no indication that soon after the town would become a multicultural and multi-ethnic center, inhabited not only by Poles but also Armenians, Greeks, Russians, Germans, Italians, Scots and Jews. At first the Hetman guaranteed only Catholics the right to settle in Zamość. However, life soon modified his ideas and as early as in 1585 Zamoyski allowed Armenians, and in 1588 Jews, to settle in the town.

Zamoyski’s consent related however only to the Sephardi Jews, who came from Turkey, Venice and probably also from Amsterdam, and who were able to provide Zamość with excellent trade relations with the Levant (the Middle East). They were allowed to settle within the town walls and establish their own *kehilla* (a religious community). Sephardim are the Jewish people who had lived in the Iberian Peninsula, from where they were exiled at the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> c. Some of their customs, liturgy as well as musical and language traditions distinguished them from Ashkenazi Jews, who came from Germany and at the time dominated in Poland.

The privilege issued by Jan Zamoyski allowed the Sephardic Jews to build houses in Żydowska St. (now Zamenhofa St.; “Żydowska” stands in Polish word for “Jewish”), and to erect a synagogue, a cheder (a religious school for boys) and a mikvah (a ritual bath). What is important, Jews who settled in Zamość got the legal status equal to other citizens, which at the time was not a standard. They could earn their living as craftsmen and tradesmen. The privilege gave them also the right to produce goods of luxury: elegant clothes, jewelry and house equipment. Jews could also work as pharmacists and doctors. The Jewish community of Zamość was meant to remain Sephardi, although the Ashkenazi Jews could be admitted to join after having obtained the permission from the owner of the town and from the community. But at the time Sephardim did not allow mixed marriages with Ashkenazim, as differences between both groups were regarded as too serious.

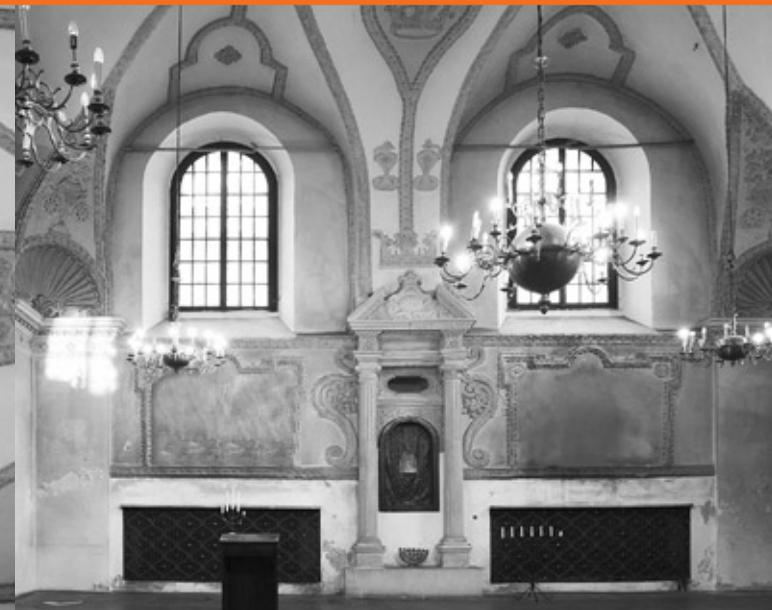
At the turn of the 16<sup>th</sup> and the 17<sup>th</sup> c. the first Jewish cemetery in Zamość was founded, where in 1804 Rabbi Yaakov Kranz, the famous Magid of Dubno, was buried (today there are no traces of the cemetery and the Zamość Cultural Center stands in its place). In the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> c. the famous, still-existent Renaissance synagogue was erected in Żydowska St., followed by the communal house of learning and prayers – a *Beth Midrash*. The Jewish district gradually developed, covering not



The attic of the Old City synagogue



The vault of the main hall in the Old City synagogue



The eastern wall of the Old City synagogue

only Żydowska St. but also Pereca St. and the Salt Market (Rynek Solny). At the time the intellectual level of the Jewish community was so high that already in the 17<sup>th</sup> c. the Jewish Zamość was referred to as “the town full of scholars and writers with no difference”.

### The End of the Sephardi Community

The wars which struck Poland in the 17<sup>th</sup> c., especially the Hetman Khmelnitsky uprising and the Swedish invasion commonly known as “The Deluge”, ended the history of the Sephardi community in Zamość. Most of Sephardim left the town and were replaced by Ashkenazim, thanks to which the Zamość *kehilla* became a part of a vast communal organization of Polish Jews. Since the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> c. Zamość was represented at the Council of Four Lands (the central body of Jewish administration in Poland from 1580 to 1764), where the Zamość delegates spoke as well on behalf of smaller Jewish communities from the Zamość Entail.

### Religious and Intellectual Life

In the 18<sup>th</sup> c. Zamość became an important center for the education of future rabbis. Rabbi Yaakov Izaak Hochgelentner established the Zamość Yeshiva of the Wise Men, the first rabbinic school in the town. Unlike other communities in southeastern Poland, the Jewish community of Zamość never joined the Chassidic movement, which influenced Polish territories in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> c. It was probably determined by the attitude of the local, well-educated rabbis and the Jewish elite attached to tradition. Unlike smaller communities surrounding Zamość, where Chassidism found many supporters, the capital of the Entail became a significant anti-Chassidic center, and later a center of *Haskalah* (the Hebrew word for “Enlightenment”), an all-European movement calling for renouncing isolationism and pressing for involvement of Jews in social and political life of the countries in which they lived. Zamość was hometown of Rabbi Ezriel Halevi Horovitz, a major opponent of Chassidism

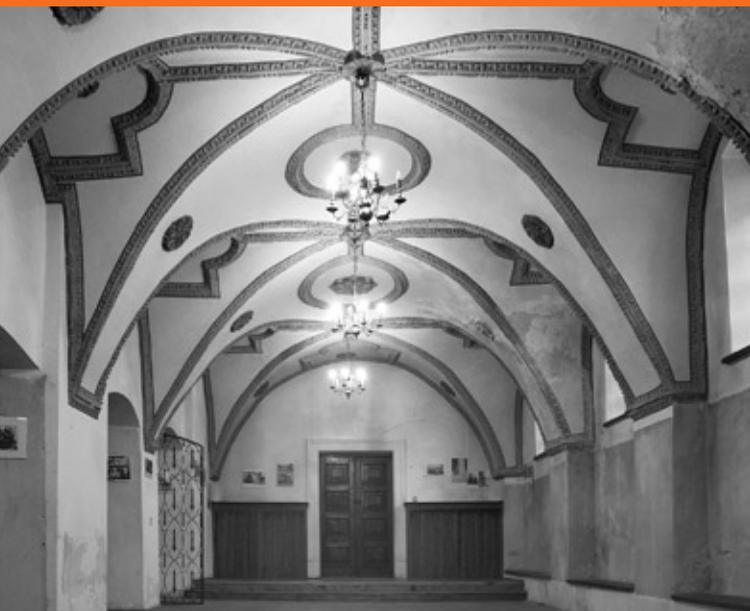
and, above all, of Rabbi Jacob Isaac Horovitz, called “The Seer of Lublin”, who was the famous leader of the Lublin Chassidim. In the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> c. there were only two small Chassidic groups in Zamość: one supporting the Tzadik of Góra Kalwaria and the other – the Tzadik of Belz.

While Chassidism never gained many followers in Zamość, at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> c. the ideas of *Haskalah* became very popular there. One of the supporters of the ideas was Rabbi Israel Ben Moshe Halevi Zamość, philosopher and mathematician. He became famous in the entire Europe and was, among others, the teacher of Moses Mendelssohn, a famous philosopher, whose theories led to assimilation of German Jews.

The *Haskalah* movement in Zamość was represented not only by rabbis. It was also supported by people like Alexander Tzederbaum, the creator of the first newspapers in Yiddish (“Kol Mevaser”) and in Hebrew (“Hamelitz”) published in Russia. Zamość was also hometown to Isaac Leib Peretz (1852-1915), considered as one of the fathers of the Yiddish literature. Although most of his works were written in Warsaw, the plots of many of them take place in the Zamość background, like *Chassidic Tales* or a play *A Night in the Old Marketplace*. Also Rose Luxemburg, a famous socialist activist, was born in Zamość (in 1871). However, one has to remember that the Zamość *kehilla* was dominated by traditional Jews and the progressive intelligentsia made a minority of the community.

### Under Partitions

After the Congress of Vienna in 1815 and incorporating of the town into the Congress Kingdom of Poland (a puppet state under Russian imperial rule), the tsarist authorities decided to extend the Zamość fortress. The civilians who lived in the Old City, which was located within the walls of the fortress, in 1822 had to move to the suburbs, mainly to Nowa Osada (“New Settlement”), later called Nowe Miasto (“New Town”). The *kehilla* also found its new seat there.



*The northern annex for women in the Old City synagogue*



*The attic of the Old City synagogue*



*The elevation of the Old City synagogue*

At the time the Jewish community constituted the majority of the population of the town. In 1827 out of 5,414 citizens there were 2,874 Jews, which comprised 53% of all the inhabitants. In 1857 there were 2,490 Jews out of 4,035 citizens. In 1897 7,034 Jews lived in Zamość, which made 62% of the total number of the town inhabitants.

It was not until 1866 that the Russian authorities allowed the civilians to come back to the Old City, which was connected with the fact that Zamość lost its statute of a fortress. An interesting situation occurred: many Jews, mostly the poorer ones, remained in the New Town, and the Jewish elite moved to the Old City. And so there were actually two Jewish communities in Zamość, having their own synagogues and rabbis. Cheders and mikvahs were also separate. From 1866 to 1872 a new, still-existent synagogue in the New Town was built. The supporters of Chassidism managed to come to the fore in that community and the descendants of "The Seer of Lublin" assumed the posts of rabbis there.

Most of the Zamość Jews earned their living with trade and crafts. Before World War I over 90% of shops and over 75% of craftsmen's workshops belonged to Jews. During the interwar period this number diminished to the advantage of Polish businesses, however, until 1939 Jews dominated trade and crafts in Zamość, as well as in other towns of Lublin province. In 1907, as the old Jewish cemetery had run out of space, the community established a new one, located in Prosta St. In 1910 there were 9,188 Jews among 14,593 inhabitants of the town.

In the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> c. a new group appeared among the Jewish elite of Zamość: people who assimilated into Polish culture. Although the group was small, it was very active. It is enough to mention the Hernhut family, who ran a Russian-Polish printing house and a bookstore which was well-known in Zamość. In 1913 all six bookshops in the town belonged to Jews and apart from the Hernhuts' printing house there were also three others owned by Jews, publishing books not only in

the Jewish languages but also in Polish and Russian. As early as in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> c. lay Jewish schools with lectures on the history of Jews and the modern Hebrew language started to appear in Zamość. The first Jewish public library in Lubelskie province was also established in Zamość.

Zionist and socialist movements started to appear in Zamość quite early. The Bund, a Jewish socialist party, was active already in 1903. However, the modern Jewish political life in fact began to flourish in Zamość during World War I, especially under the Austro-Hungarian occupation, which was much more liberal than the Russian rule. At the time most of the modern Jewish political parties started to be active and Jews became members of the Zamość Municipal Council. Many social, cultural and economic institutions, independent from the ones run by the *kehilla*, were founded, e.g. the Old Jewish People's and Handicaps' Home or the children's asylum.

But World War I brought also many tragic moments. In 1914 the Russian army accused the Jewish community of collaboration with Austrians, which led to the execution of 11 Jews and a few Poles. Soon after the end of the Great War, during the Polish-Bolshevik War (1919-1921), when the Budyonny's Cavalry Army besieged the town, soldiers of general Bulak-Balachowicz's division carried out a pogrom of Jews in Zamość, this time accused of cooperation with Bolsheviks.

### The Interwar Period

The interwar period (1918–1939) was the heyday of the Zamość Jewish community development in its economic, cultural, political and social dimensions. It is worth noticing that in 1927 the Jewish Communal Co-Educational Humane Middle School was established with classes held in Polish. Numerous magazines came out in Yiddish, e.g. a bi-weekly "Zamoszczer Sztyme" ("Voice of Zamość"), published by the Zionist-Socialist Party Poale Zion and appearing in 1928 and from 1937 to 1939. Jews



*The New Town synagogue, today a kindergarten*



*The former house of the rabbi*



*The monument commemorating the Zamosc Jews on the new cemetery*

had also 9 libraries, 4 bookshops and 3 big printing houses. Apart from lay schools there were also religious ones, mostly traditional cheders, as well as a small yeshiva.

During the interwar period 94.7% of the Jewish citizens of the town declared that they spoke Yiddish in their everyday life, although for the younger generation the Polish language was gradually becoming the most important. At the same time 4.1% of Jews declared Polish as their home language, which made more than in much bigger Lublin, where it comprised 2.5%. Jews still dominated trade, crafts and industry, although many Polish businesses were established during the interwar period. In 1924 75.7% of trading firms in Zamość belonged to Jews, as did 54.5% of factories.

Just before the outbreak of World War II Zamość was inhabited by 12,531 Jews, who made 43% of its population. They lived mainly in the Old City and in the New Town.

### **World War II and the Holocaust**

In September 1939, after World War II had broken out, Zamość got under the German occupation. At the time Jews were violently persecuted, beaten and robbed by German soldiers. It was no surprise then, that after the Russian troops entered the town, they were greeted by the Zamość Jews if not joyfully, then at least with relief. Soviet ruling in Zamość lasted for two weeks. Some Jews, especially with leftist views, openly collaborated with new authorities. When the Russian troops were withdrawing from the town, it was officially announced among Jews, that they were allowed to evacuate with the Red Army. A big part of the Jewish community, having experienced the cruelty of Germans during their short stay in Zamość, decided to escape over the Bug river. It is estimated that around 7,000-8,000 Jews could flee the town. Most of them stopped right behind the border of the Soviet occupation, mainly in Volodymyr-Volynskiy and Lviv, and in 1941, when those areas were seized by the Nazis, the

refugees suffered the fate of the local Jewry. A small part of displaced people was deported in 1940 and 1941 by Russians to Siberia, and many of them survived there until the end of World War II.

After Russians had left Zamość in 1939, there were only some 4,000 Jews in the town. Within a short time their population rose as a result of the influx of Jews exiled by Germans from Polish territories incorporated into the Third Reich. Those were large groups of Jews from Włocławek, Koło, Kalisz and Łódź. At the end of 1940 there were about 2,500 displaced people in the town.

The German occupation meant for Jews systematic brutal persecutions and insults. Their properties were stolen and they were forced to work both in the town and in labor camps all around Lublin district, mainly in nearby camps in Bełżec and Bortatycze. On May 1<sup>st</sup>, 1941 the German authorities ordered all Zamość Jews to settle in the New Town and thus created a separate Jewish quarter (however, a closed ghetto was never established in Zamość).

In March 1942 Germans began "Operation Reinhardt", the plan aimed at exterminating Jews from the General Government (a part of Polish territories which were not annexed to the Third Reich). In Bełżec, 40 km away from Zamość, the Nazis created a death camp. The first deportation from Zamość to Bełżec took place on the Jewish holiday of Passover, on April 11<sup>th</sup>, 1941, when almost 2,500 people were transported to the camp. The elder and the infirm were murdered by Germans right in the houses or in the streets. Officially Germans told the Zamość Jews that they were being sent "to the East" to work. In fact, they were all killed in the death camp in Bełżec. 15-year-old Lejb Wolsztajn managed to escape from the camp and told the truth about Bełżec to the officials of the Zamość Jewish Council. The story of young Wolsztajn was never officially transmitted to the ghetto inhabitants.

After the first stage of the "Operation", three other large transports of people arrived in Zamość: almost 1,000 German Jews were brought from Dortmund and over 2,000 Czech Jews from the Theresienstadt ghetto. The second stage of the deportation began in Zamość on the Jewish holiday of Shavuot, on May 24<sup>th</sup>, 1942. On May 27<sup>th</sup>, 1942 almost 2,000 Jews were taken away to Sobibór, the second to Bełżec death camp in Lublin district. On August 11<sup>th</sup>, 1942 about 400 Jews from Zamość were transported to the death camp in Majdanek, and in September 1942 another 400 people were deported to the death camp in Bełżec.

The final liquidation of the Jewish quarter in Zamość took place on October 16<sup>th</sup>, 1942, when the few surviving Zamość Jews who remained in the New Town were ordered by Germans to move to the nearby village of Izbica. On October 18<sup>th</sup>, 1942, Germans officially announced Zamość *Judenrein* – a town "free from Jews". Most of the Zamość Jews were deported from Izbica to the death camps in Bełżec, Sobibór and Majdanek. Just a few managed to flee and, thanks to the help of Poles, to survive the war. At the time small groups of Jewish prisoners were still kept in labor camps in Zamość; in 1943 they were all killed or deported to the death camp in Majdanek.

Only about 50 Jews from Zamość saved their lives out of ravages of war. A bit larger group of the Zamość Jews survived the war in the distant parts of Russia. In 1945, just after the liberation of Poland, only 224 Jews lived in the town and it is hard to estimate how many of them originated from Zamość. As a result of the afterwar migration from Poland, in 1947 their number shrank to only 5 people. The Jewish survivors from Zamość and their descendants are now associated in the Landsmanshaft of Jews from Zamość and the Zamość Region in Israel, which has at the moment about 2,000 members.

### Traces of Presence

Nowadays numerous objects still remind us of the rich history of the Zamość Jews. Soon after the war, on the area of the Jewish cemetery in Prosta St., which was destroyed by the Germans, a monument built of broken *matzevot* was erected to commemorate the murdered Jews of Zamość. The synagogue in the New Town (32 Gminna St.) still exists, however, it was transformed into a kindergarten and a part of it is used as a Protestant church. In the former mikvah (3 Zamenhofa St.) a jazz club has been located. In the Old City synagogue (9-11 Zamenhoffa St.) a public library functioned for many years. Since 2005 the synagogue is the property of the Foundation for the Preservation of Jewish Heritage in Poland.

| Robert Kuwałek

## Activities. Revitalization of the Zamość synagogue.

The most splendid monument of Jewish culture in Zamość is the Renaissance synagogue in the Old City quarter, owned by the Foundation for the Preservation of Jewish Heritage in Poland.

In 2005, after the ownership of the building was transferred to the Foundation, the synagogue was in a very bad technical condition: water was leaking through the roof and flooding the vaults and walls, which could lead to the collapse of the building. Within a short time the Foundation carried out the necessary restoration works and thus secured the building from further devastation.

The next step of the Foundation for the Preservation of Jewish Heritage in Poland was the preparation of the project of the Zamość synagogue revitalization, covering plans to renovate and to adapt the building for the needs of a tourist and cultural information center of the Chassidic Route.

The revitalized synagogue will also become the seat of the local culture-oriented non-governmental organizations, as well as the multimedia Museum of Jews from Zamość and the Zamość Region. The Museum will show the history of merging and mutual enrichment of Jewish and Polish cultures in the region. It will also present the Jewish personalities who influenced the intellectual, religious and cultural character of Zamość and the area (e.g. Isaac Leib Peretz, Magid of Dubno, Bolesław Leśmian). The permanent exhibition of the Museum will be created with the use of the multimedia high technology.

Thanks to the partnership between the Foundation for the Preservation of Jewish Heritage in Poland and the Zamość institutions, like the College of Management and Public Administration, the BWA Gallery and the High School of Arts, the restored synagogue will serve the educational and cultural activities, appealing to the town and region inhabitants and matching their needs. The synagogue will also serve as a place of worship for the visiting Jewish groups.

The building of the synagogue still requires rapid and complex restoration. The Foundation for the Preservation of Jewish Heritage in Poland is now searching for resources to carry out the works. Thanks to the financial support of the PHARE 2003 European Union Program Interreg IIIA, the Foundation has already prepared the necessary technical documentation of the synagogue, which made it possible to apply for co-financing of the project of the Zamość synagogue revitalization to the European Union funds.

← A window of the Old City synagogue



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Information and educational materials on the Jewish culture are available on the website of the "To Bring Memory Back" program [www.PAMIEC.FODZ.PL](http://www.PAMIEC.FODZ.PL) and on the Internet portal POLIN – Polish Jews Heritage [www.POLIN.ORG.PL](http://www.POLIN.ORG.PL)

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