

FOUNDATION FOR
THE PRESERVATION
OF JEWISH HERITAGE
IN POLAND



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Jarosław

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) 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), 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:

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Dear Sirs,

This publication is dedicated to the history of the Jewish community of [Jarosław](#), 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 localities, 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 18th, 17th or even 16th c. Many of those cemeteries have still been 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”?

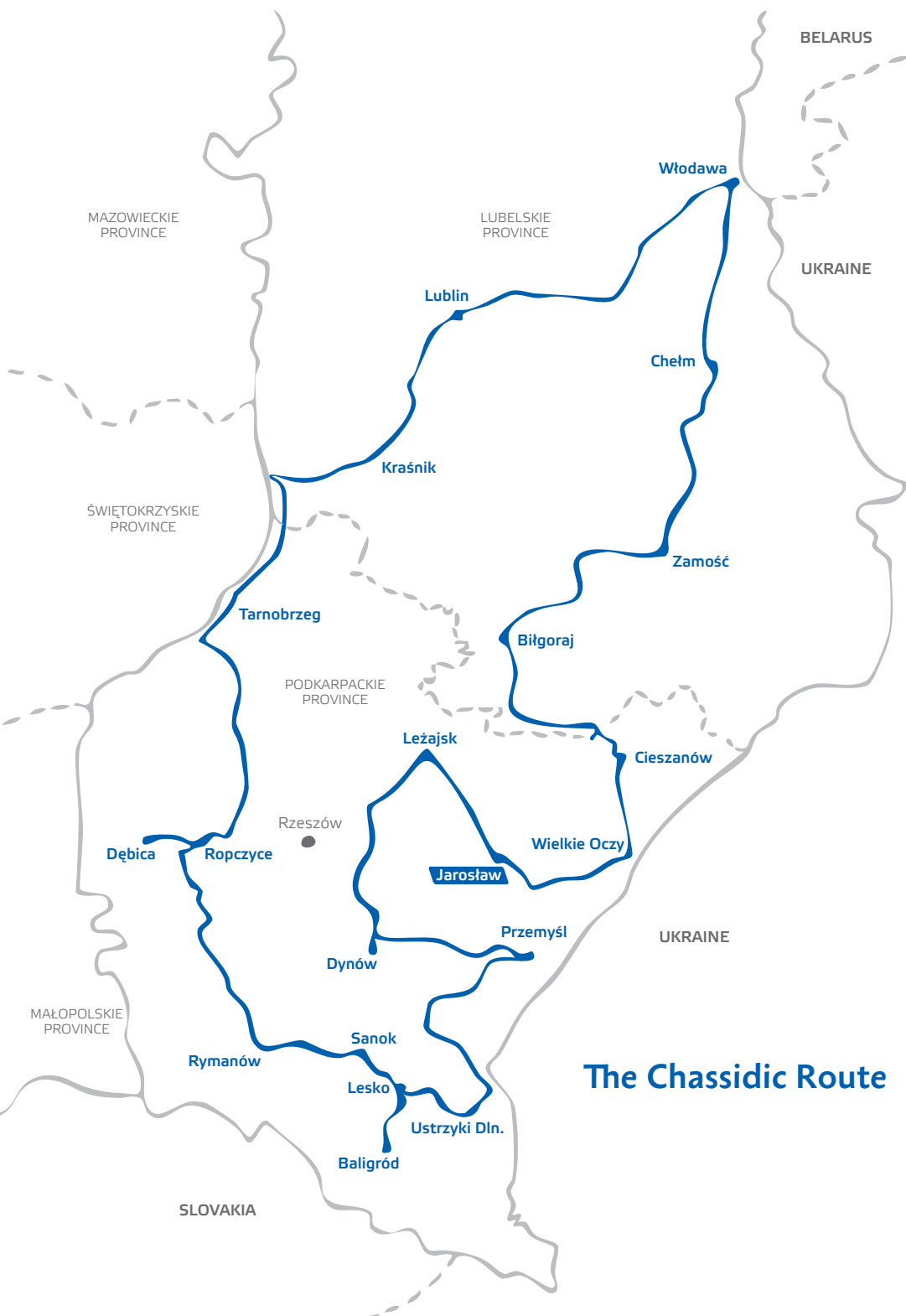
For centuries Poland used to be the homeland to many generations of Jews. An unprecedented development of Jewish culture, as well as religious thought and writing, took place in this country. Here in the 18th c. emerged Chassidism, one of the most important currents in Judaism ever. It gained particularly 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 19th 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 (*yortzait*), 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

The Chassidic Route – Places of Interest:

BALIGRÓD – a cemetery established at the beginning of the 18th c.

BIŁGORAJ – a cemetery established in the 19th c.

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

CIESZANÓW – a synagogue from the end of the 19th c.; a cemetery established in the 19th c.

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

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

JAROSŁAW – two synagogues from the 19th c. and a cemetery established at the beginning of the 18th c.

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

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

LEŻAJSK (LIZHENSK) – a cemetery established in the 17th 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 *Yeshivat Chachmei Lublin* (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 16th 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 19th c.

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

ROP CZYCE – a cemetery established in the 18th c.

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

SANOK – a synagogue of the *Yad Charuzim* society, build in the 19th c.; a synagogue erected in the 1920's; a so called “new cemetery” established in the 19th c.

TARNOBZEG – a cemetery established at the beginning of the 20th c. with the grave of Tzadik Eliezer Horovitz of Dzików.

USTRYKI DOLNE – a cemetery established in the 18th c.

WIELKIE OCZY – a synagogue from the beginning of the 20th c.; a cemetery established in the 18th c.

WŁODAWA – a Baroque synagogue complex from the second half of the 18th c.

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



The Big Synagogue



The Big Synagogue



The Big Synagogue

Jarosław is a town in Podkarpackie (Subcarpathian) province, located on the San River and inhabited by about 40,000 people. The earliest reference to Jarosław dates back to 1152. In 1323 the town was granted with the Polish Rights, defining its privileges and laws, and in 1375 – with the Magdeburg Rights. Jarosław developed very dynamically at the time, the proof of which is the fact, that three four-week-long fairs used to take place there each year.

The First Jews in Jarosław

Jews settled in Jarosław relatively late; the first reference to their presence dates back to 1464. Two Jews, named in documents as Abraham Judaeus and David Judaeus, lived in the town in 1561. Information from 1613 says about five Jews residing in Jarosław.

The reason for such a slow development of the Jewish community was the *de non tolerandis Judaeis* right, banning Jews to settle within the area of Jarosław, announced in 1571 by Zofia Tarnowska, the then owner of the town. At the time, the right was in effect in many Polish and European cities, and served as a means of protection of Christian townsmen against the competition of Jewish merchants. However, it was not strictly observed; in several towns Jews reached agreements with burghers and settled despite the law.

Due to its favorable geographic location and its economic importance, in the beginning of 17th c., Jarosław was appointed the seat of the Council of Four Lands. It was the supreme authority of the Jewish self-government in Poland, in the forum of which decisions concerning issues of all the communities in the country were taken. Jarosław, alternately with Lublin, was the place of the Council sessions until its dissolution in 1764. The town hosted conventions of regional Jewish councils as well.

In 1638, King Władysław IV granted the kehilla (i.e. the Jewish religious community) of Przemyśl with a privilege, which subordinated the Jews of Jarosław to that community for many years. According to this right, the Jewish population of all the towns and villages near Przemyśl *were obliged to recognize this city as the oldest* (i.e. the most important), *bury the dead there, perform rituals in the Przemyśl synagogue, pay taxes, take apples from them, as tradition has it, pay 3 zlotys for the salaries of doctors (or rabbis), make appeals against sentences to the rabbi*. As far as the writ to bury the dead on the Przemyśl cemetery is concerned, the privilege simply consolidated the *status quo*, for even before 1638 the Jarosław Jews had been buried on the Przemyśl necropolis. However, the regulation on *performing rituals* in the Przemyśl synagogue remained defunct, because the Jews of Jarosław, like most of Jewish communities at that time, already had their house of prayer.

Many Jewish centers in the eastern territories of Poland became victims of invasions of the Cossack rebellion troops in the 17th c. Jarosław was also captured and destroyed, although there were no attacks on Jews in the town. Tradition has it, that they left the town after a warning about the upcoming Cossack raid, and found shelter in western Lesser Poland (Małopolska, a region in southern Poland). After the danger was over, they came back to the town and established a feast celebrated since then yearly in memory of their survival.

The Development of the Jewish Community

The population of the Jewish community in Jarosław started to grow rapidly in the 17th c. It was the reason for numerous conflicts with Christian townsmen, who feared the competition of Jewish merchants. In 1664, the authorities of Jarosław issued a decree, submitted to an edict by the bishop of



*The building and the synagogue
of the Yad Charuzim Society*



*The building and the synagogue
of the Yad Charuzim Society*



The Jewish hospital

Przemyśl Stanisław Samowolski, and forbade Christians to let flats to Jews and hire them to work. In 1687, Józef Karol Lubomirski, the then owner of Jarosław, issued a document, which ordered Jews to leave the town, and those who gave shelter to them would be severely punished. One year later, the law was sustained. The *de non tolerandis Judaeis* right was renewed for the last time by Teofila Ludwika Lubomirska in 1704.

Although the legal situation of the Jarosław Jews was disadvantageous, their number grew continuously. At the turn of the 17th and 18th c., there was a street in the northwestern part of the town, inhabited solely by Jews. In the end of the 17th c., they also had their own cemetery, however, due to the *de non tolerandis Judaeis* right, it was established outside the town borders behind the Pełkińska Gate, in the so-called Ruthenian suburb. Establishing of a cemetery was a sign of the Jarosław Jews' emancipation and their longing towards independence from the Przemyśl kehilla. The existence of the necropolis was officially recognized by the Jewish Council, which debated in Jarosław in 1700. Four of the Council members: Rabbi Naftali Kohen of Poznań, Rabbis Saul and Zecharje Mendel of Cracow, along with Menachem Mendel of Lviv outlined the area of the cemetery and set a funeral fee in the amount of 60 zlotys.

In the second half of the 17th c., the Jarosław Jews already owned a synagogue, located probably in the outskirts of the town. In 1704, Jeszaja of Cracow served as rabbi in Jarosław and simultaneously in nearby Kovel (today in Ukraine). As a rabbi of an auxiliary kehilla, Jeszaja was subordinated to the rabbi of Przemyśl. From 1737, Mojżesz Jechoszja was the rabbi in Jarosław (and previously – in Nowy Sącz). That year, it was stated in documents that already over 100 Jewish families were living in Jarosław.

1744 was a crucial year in the history of the Jarosław Jews, as it was then that an independent kehilla was established in the town and the local community dissociated itself from the one of Przemyśl. The first rabbi of the independent kehilla in Jarosław was Jechoszja Horwitz. Despite the fact that King Augustus III renewed the decree of 1638, ordering the Jews of Jarosław and nearby towns to serve some duties for the Przemyśl kehilla – which he did at the request of the Przemyśl Jews – the Jarosław kehilla remained completely independent. The number of Jews in the town increased consistently, reaching 1,884 people in 1765.

After the first partition of Poland by Russia, Prussia and Austria in 1772, Jarosław was incorporated into the Austrian Empire. However, this did not halt the development of the local Jewish community; on the contrary – the scope of its influence started to grow. While previously the rule of the kehilla had been limited just to the town, from 1785 all the other nearby localities were subordinated to it. At the turn of the 19th c., the kehilla began building of a new brick synagogue (still-existent) close to the Market Square, and completed the construction in 1811. Two years later, Jews already made one fourth of the Jarosław population: there were 2,355 of them out of 9,007 inhabitants.

The Sources of Income of the Jarosław Jews

The Jews of Jarosław worked as merchants, lenders, leaseholders of inns, tolls collectors, and mills lessees. Jewish businessmen also used to take out a lease on a ferry on the San River, as well as the river on its own, thanks to which they could trade in fish. The wealthiest merchant of Jarosław in the 18th c. was a Kellerman, who monopolized the corn trade in Galicia.



The Small Synagogue



The cemetery



The cemetery

The Jarosław Jews worked also as freelancers, mostly as doctors. The first known Jewish medic in the town was Doctor Icchok, who is known also for being a member of a funeral fraternity *Chevre Kadisha*. Another Jewish doctor, Abraham Icchok Chazak, lived in Jarosław in the first half of the 18th c.; his son Chaim served there as a rabbi before 1737. At the turn of the 19th c., two Jewish medics worked in the town: Jechuda Jidel and Mojżesz Strani.

In the end of the 18th c., the Jewish craftsmen of Jarosław were members of the same guilds as the Christian ones. What is interesting, Jews were treasurers of almost every guild in Jarosław. The only exceptions were the guilds of butchers and tailors, in which, until 1820, there were two treasurers: a Catholic and a Jew. Thus Christian tailors and butchers tried to defend themselves against the domination of the Jewish competitors, who waited not only on all the Jewish population, but also part of the Christian one. The poorest Jews usually earned their living as physical laborers, e.g. as carriers.

Social Life

In the 18th and 19th c., all the Jewish organizations and societies of Jarosław were of religious character. The oldest organization in the town was the funeral fraternity *Chevre Kadisha*, established probably before the Jewish cemetery in Jarosław was created. Its task was to prepare the dead to funerals and to lead the bodies to the cemetery; the most important and the highest regarded residents of the town belonged to the organization. Later, *Chevre Kadisha* was active in charity as well: aids were a constant part in its budget, and each year on Pesach, a certain sum of money was donated to the poorest for buying matzah. The fraternity also supported the Jewish hospital and the *Bikur Cholim* society, which took care of the ill.

Intellectual and Religious Life

Jarosław as a center of Jewish religious thought reached its peak of development at the turn of the 18th and 19th c. At the time, Jakub Ornstein (1775–1839) and Szymon Maryles (d. 1850), two outstanding representatives of the Jewish community and polar opposites of science and religion, were active in the town. Ornstein established in Jarosław a significant center of Talmudic studies, while Maryles created there a Chassidic center. At the same time, the Haskalah movement, which called for the assimilation of Jews, started to spread its ideas in Jarosław; however, they did not gain many supporters.

Jakub Ornstein (from 1801 a rabbi in Zhovkva, from 1809 in Lviv; today both localities in Ukraine) is known for being the author of a popular and important Talmudic work entitled *Yeshivas Yaakov*. Talmudic lectures given by Ornstein achieved much acclaim among the Jarosław Jews. The level of the spiritual life in the town was so high, that in the introduction to the compilation of marriage rules, entitled *Even Ha'ezer*, Ornstein characterized the Jews of Jarosław as proficient in Talmud, and described his local students as excellent. Many Jewish scholars used to visit Ornstein, among others the rabbi of Tarnogród Eliezer Horowitz, and a great wise man of the time Aron Mojżesz Taubes, later the rabbi of Sniatyn (now in Ukraine).

This was also the time of the activity of Szymon Maryles, an outstanding member of the Chassidic movement, commonly regarded as a miracle-worker. He was a pupil of the famous Tzadik Izaak Jakub Horowitz, called "The Seer of Lublin", and often used to visit the court of Rabbi Szulim Rokach of Bełz. Szymon Maryles was buried after his death on the Jarosław Jewish cemetery. Another important representative of Chassidism in the town was Zecharje Mendel, a famous follower of Tzadik Elimelech of Leżajsk (Lizhensk).



The cemetery



The cemetery



The cemetery

The Rough 19th C.

In the 19th c., the bloom of the Jarosław Jewish community led to a violent conflict with the Christian inhabitants. On March 25th, 1869 (Maundy Thursday), anti-Jewish riots broke out in Jarosław, lasting with short breaks until April 5th. Many Jews were hurt as the crowd broke windows in their houses and plundered their shops. The Jewish cemetery was devastated during the unrests as well. The authorities, inimical towards Jews, tolerated the incidents. This, however, did not halt the development of the Jewish community.

On October 5th, 1876, the first kehilla authorities election took place in Jarosław; Dr. Maurycy Fraenkel was voted in as the chairman. In 1889, Henryk Strisower was elected head of the community; he gained much fame for his spectacular building activity. The investments carried out during his term included: a new *Beth Midrash* (a house of prayer), a new school of two classrooms, an old people's home, and an access road to the cemetery. Additionally, during the rule of Strisower, thorough renovation of the synagogue, as well as building of a poultry slaughterhouse and a new ritual bath were decreed.

World War I led to serious impoverishment of the Jarosław residents. This caused an increase of Polish-Jewish conflicts with the climax on June 19th, 1918, when a pogrom broke out in the town.

The Interwar Period

According to the census of 1921, Jarosław was inhabited by 6,577 Jews, which made 32.9% of the town population. As of 1926, Jews were the owners of 72% of the local commercial places.

During the interwar period (1918–1939), new forms of modern Jewish social life started to develop. There were numerous lay organizations and associations in the town, among others the Farmers' Club at the Jewish Agricultural Society, the United Jewish Craftsmen's Guild, the Jewish Handicraft Society *Yad Charuzim*, the Jewish Educational and Cultural Association "Tarbut", the Healthcare Society, and many others. There were Jewish trade unions in Jarosław as well.

The interwar period was also the time of a growing activity of the Jewish political parties. The most influential organizations in Jarosław were the Zionist ones; however, the conservative Agudat Israel party had a big impact on the inhabitants too.

World War II and the Holocaust

The outbreak of World War II meant the definitive end of the Jarosław Jewish community. After capturing of the town in 1939, Nazis deported about 10,000 Jews from Jarosław and nearby localities to the Soviet occupation zone, bordered by the San River. The deportation began on September 23rd, 1939, and lasted six days. Only a handful of Jews remained in the town and they were taken away to the death camp in Bełżec in 1942.

In the spring of 1941, Germans started a consistent devastation of the Jewish cemetery in Jarosław: they demolished the pre-funeral house, the gate and the fence. Part of the gravestones was used for paving local streets and town squares. During the war, several dozen Jews shot by Nazis were buried on the cemetery.

Traces of Presence

Monuments are today the most significant mementoes reminding of 500 years of the Jewish history in Jarosław. The objects, which survived the war, are: two 19th c. synagogues (the so-called Big Synagogue in 12 Opolska St. and the so-called Small Synagogue in 5 Ordynacka St.), an imposing edifice of the Jewish Handicraft Society *Yad Charuzim*, (erected between 1907 and 1912) in 1 Tarnowskiego Sq., and the Jewish cemetery in Kruhel Pełkiński St. (in the Jarosław suburbs, to the northwest from the town).

After the war, all the buildings, which had belonged to the Jewish community, were taken over by the State Treasury. In 1963, the Big Synagogue was given to the High School of Arts, which still occupies the building. The Small Synagogue was the seat of the Chemical and Mineral Co-Operative in the 1950's, and was converted for the needs of the Monuments' Conservation Workshop between 1969 and 1973. It was sold to a private company in 2001. Today, the building is abandoned and in a bad condition. The Municipal Public Library and the State Ballet Center currently occupy the edifice of the Jewish Handicraft Society *Yad Charuzim*.

The Big Synagogue, the building of the *Yad Charuzim*, and the cemetery have recently been transferred to the Jewish community. Currently, the Foundation for the Preservation of Jewish Heritage in Poland is their owner, carrying out activities for their restoration and commemoration.

| Sławomir Mańko

Activities for the Preservation of Jewish Heritage

Thanks to the successful cooperation between the Foundation for the Preservation of Jewish Heritage in Poland, Jewish organizations and the local authorities, the surviving monuments of the Jewish culture in Jarosław are today in a relatively good condition. Hopefully, they will remind the future generations about the multicultural past of the town for many years.

In April 2006, a monument in the form of a matzeva to commemorate the Jewish community of the town was unveiled on the Jewish cemetery in Jarosław. The monument, founded by a descendant of the Jarosław Jews, was erected with the Foundation's support.

In August 2007, an access road to the cemetery was built thanks to the Foundation's effort. Earlier, it had been available only by courtesy of the owners of nearby plots. The road enabled the preparation of the cemetery fencing.

The Jarosław Town Lovers' Association, an important partner of the Foundation in the implementation of the Chassidic Route project, along with the students of the local Electronic Technical School No. 1, carried out cleanup work on the Jewish cemetery. Thanks to the Association, a publication *Jews In Jarosław From Time Immemorial Until The Half Of The 19th Century* by Mojżesz Steinberg was reprinted.

We hope that soon there will be other activities carried out in Jarosław, aiming to remind the inhabitants and tourists about the history of Jews who co-created for centuries the social character of the town and contributed to its cultural and economic development.



← The Small 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 and on the Internet portal POLIN – Polish Jews Heritage www.POLIN.ORG.PL

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