

FOUNDATION FOR
THE PRESERVATION
OF JEWISH HERITAGE
IN POLAND



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Urząd Miasta Kraśnik



Kraśnik

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:

www.fodz.pl

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Dear Sirs,

This publication is dedicated to the history of the Jewish community of **Kraśnik** 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. This pamphlet has been published thanks to the support of the Municipal Council of Kraśnik.

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.

On behalf of the Foundation for the Preservation of Jewish Heritage in Poland, I would like to thank the authorities of the Town of Kraśnik for their support in publishing of this pamphlet.

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

Monika Krawczyk | CEO





Why the “Chassidic Route”?

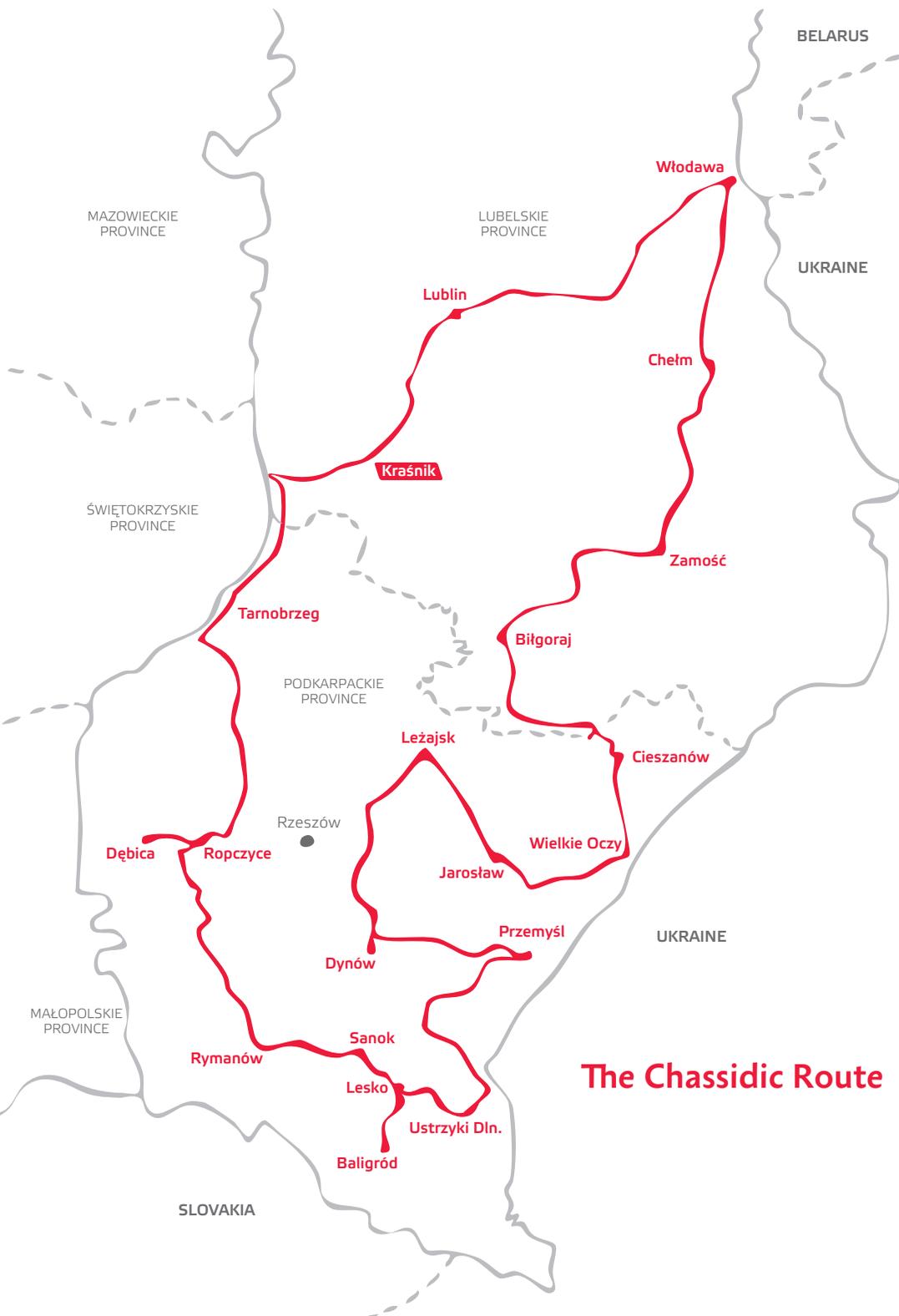
For centuries Poland used to be the homeland to many generations of Jews. An unprecedented development of Jewish culture, as well as religious thought and writing, took place in this country. Here in the 18th c. emerged Chassidism, one of the most important currents in Judaism ever. It gained particularly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

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.

PRZEMYSŁ – 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 Great Synagogue



The interior of the Small Synagogue



The main hall of the Great Synagogue

Kraśnik is a town located in Lubelskie province and is inhabited by 36,000 people. Its history dates back to the 13th c.; at the time Kraśnik was a small fair settlement, developing thanks to the favorable location on a trade route from Cracow to Kyiv. It was granted with the town rights in 1377, after King Louis I (the king of Hungary and Poland) had donated Kraśnik to Dymitr and Ivan Gorayski.

Kraśnik remained the property of the Gorayski family until 1405, when the Tęczyńskis took it over and owned until the middle of the 16th c. The Tęczyńskis strengthened the town walls, erected fortified gates and towers. At the time Kraśnik gained the largest number of privileges. The town was later inherited subsequently by the Słuckis, the Ossolińskis, and ultimately it became the property of the Grand Chancellor of the Crown Jan Zamoyski, who incorporated it into the Zamość Entail in 1604.

The First Jews in Kraśnik

The first references to the presence of Jews in the town date back to the 1530's. Documents say that already in 1531 two Kraśnik Jews, Mojżesz and Salomon, had commercial relations with Gdańsk, and that in 1530 and 1531, Jews from Kraśnik transported wax and silk through customs in Lublin.

In the 16th c., Kraśnik obtained the *de non tolerandis Judaeis* right, which prohibited Jews from settling in its area. However, it is unclear whether the town was granted with the privilege at the time of its location or afterwards. The *de non tolerandis Judaeis* right was in effect in many Polish and European towns and served as one of ways of protecting Christian inhabitants from the competition of Jewish merchants. Nonetheless, not every authority obeyed the right: it is confirmed that Jews lived in Kraśnik even when there was a formal ban on their settling in the town.

The *de non tolerandis Judaeis* right was lifted in 1584. Jews were officially allowed to reside in Kraśnik and obliged to pay taxes in the amount of one Red Gulden and one Hard Thaler for a whole plot, and half Red Gulden and half Hard Thaler for half of a plot. Jewish bailiffs, who did not have any real estate, had to pay the same tax as the owners of half of a plot. In the 16th c., (the exact date is unknown) the oldest Jewish cemetery in Kraśnik, located in the area of the contemporary Podwalna St., was established.

Although taxes paid by Jews were a significant source of income for the owners of the town, it was not the only reason for lifting the *de non tolerandis Judaeis* right. Magnates expected that the presence of Jews would contribute to the development of the trade and the economy of the town, as Jewish merchants were helpful in establishing landed estates and exporting corn.

The Kraśnik Jews had the right to sell goods in retail and wholesale from 1584. They traded in industrial and food products, owned breweries and distilleries. They were also allowed to live and own stalls in the Market Square. They were not subordinated to regulations limiting their settling or trading, which was still very unusual at the time.

The Development of the Jewish Community

Remaining documents say that at the turn of the 16th and the 17th c., the Kraśnik Jews used to reside at the Market Square and in surrounding Lubelska St. and Żydowska St. ("Żydowska" stands in Polish for "Jewish"), as well as in houses by the town walls. Six or seven (out of 27) houses at the Market Square belonged to Jews: Aron, Dawid, Zelman, Liman, Marek, Eliasz, and Józef. A wooden



The main hall of the Great Synagogue



The Great Synagogue



The main hall of the Great Synagogue

synagogue stood probably close to the market; however, no precise information about it has survived. The house of the rabbi was next to it. There was also a Jewish hospital within the town walls, serving at the same time as a hostel for travelers. The cantor lived nearby.

There was also a mikvah (a ritual bath) in Kraśnik. Rich Jews used to build private ones: in 1648 Jakub Heliaszowicz bought a small building by the Wyżnica River, close to the public mikvah, in order to organize a bath in it.

At the turn of the 16th and 17th c., Jews played a significant role in the economic life of Kraśnik. They worked as artisans, producers and traders. They were also leaseholders of mills, markets, ponds, distilleries and breweries in Kraśnik as well as in other towns of the Zamość Entail.

The economic situation of the Jewish families was various. Apart from prosperous merchants and independent craftsmen (butchers, musicians, bakers, wine and other alcohol producers, brewers, tailors and furriers), the town was inhabited by simple workers, stallholders, coachmen and carriers. Some of them were merchants and producers on a large scale, like Jakub Kózka, who owned numerous properties in the town. In the 17th c., the Kraśnik Jews had also jobs connected with the religious cult: there are numerous references in documents about cantors and melameds (religious teachers).

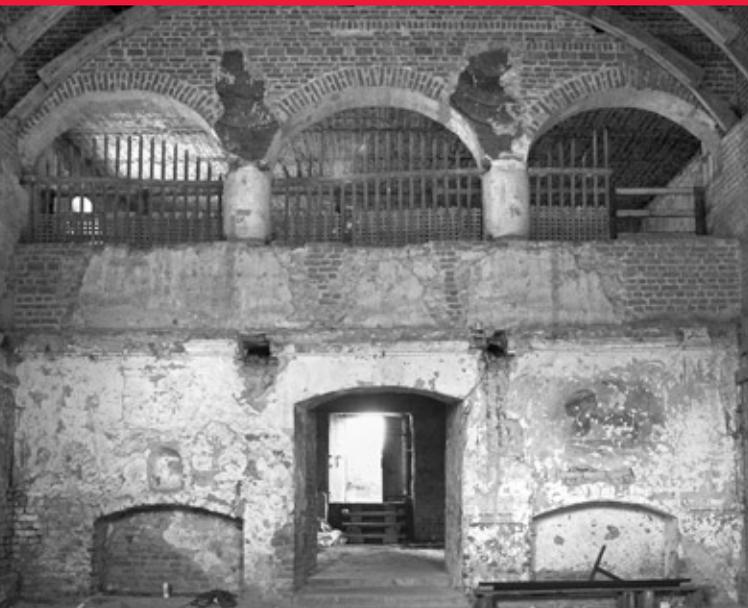
There is very few information on the internal structure of the Kraśnik Jewish community before the middle of the 17th c. A kehilla (a religious community) with a rabbi, a cantor and the elders obviously existed there. The latter represented the community in front of the owner of the town and the local authorities. They were also in charge of the finances of the community, managed its properties and looked after widows and orphans.

In the 17th c., the town entered into many economic contracts with the kehilla, mainly concerning taxes and the right to inhabit and keep stalls by Jews in certain streets. The elders of the community sometimes concluded contracts only on behalf of concrete groups, like butchers or other merchants, and mediated in the agreements on taxes, butchery rental charges and guild membership.

The case of the conservation of the town walls became at the time the reason for a conflict between the town and the Jewish community. Jews often lived close to the walls and erected outbuildings adjacent to them, which met with strong opposition of the town. The authorities demanded very high charges for the conservation of the walls.

After the fire in the town in 1637, a Jew named Boruch was accused of the arson. Following that event, the owner of Kraśnik, Tomasz Zamoyski, probably at prompting of the municipal and Church authorities, prohibited Jews to rebuild their houses and stalls at the Market Square. Special residential areas were sectioned off for Jews outside the town center. It was not until 1661 that the decree by Zamoyski was lifted.

During the fire in 1637, the Kraśnik wooden synagogue burnt. The Jewish community started to build a new one, made of bricks, today called "the Big" or "the Great" (as opposed to the Small Synagogue, erected nearby in the 19th c.). It was built to the south of the Market Square, at the town wall, in the current Bóźniczka St.



The balcony for women in the Great Synagogue



A wall painting in the main hall of the Great Synagogue



The main hall of the Small Synagogue

Taxes

At the turn of the 16th and the 17th c., Jews of privately owned towns had to subsidize for the country, for the owner of the area where they lived, and often for the municipal and Church authorities. The Kraśnik Jews paid the State treasury the so-called Jewish poll tax, introduced in 1549, and many other taxes according to the State regulations. As the right to reside was subject to charges, every Jew used to pay the town's owner the tax comprising of the rent and the spice tax, and Jews who lived in the center of the town were additionally obliged to pay the bath tax. The houses of rabbis and cantors were tax-free.

There was also a habit in Kraśnik that each year on Easter, Jews donated a certain amount of spices (at the time very rare and expensive, imported from abroad, like pepper, cinnamon, cloves) to the authorities of the town. They did that because Christians often used to attack Jewish houses on the night between Maundy Thursday and Good Friday. On the order of the town's owner, the authorities strengthened guard on that night, and were given expensive spices in exchange.

Jews also paid the town for the opportunity of running the stalls. In the 1650's, the municipal authorities, who leased butcheries to Jews, started to charge them with fees in the amount of 24 Zlotys per year as well as in kind (2 pounds of pepper on Christmas). The Town Council declared in exchange to keep order around the butcheries.

The Downfall and the Boom

The disasters, which struck Poland in the middle of the 17th c., like the Hetman Khmelnitsky rebellion (1648–1654) and the Swedish invasion called "The Deluge" (1657), ruined the economy of Kraśnik.

In 1606 the town was inhabited by 808 people, and in 1674 – only by 604. The number of Jews diminished too: in 1661, there were 114 of them in the town (which made 14% of all the inhabitants) and 13 years later – 52 (8% of the total).

In the 18th c., the town started to rise up from ruins. Following the general growth of the local population, the number of Jews also grew: in 1765 there were 921 of them and in 1787 they made 64% of all the inhabitants. Jews owned almost all the houses in the town center and their community became one of the largest and most important in the Lublin region. In 1799, there were 405 houses in Kraśnik, which were inhabited by 387 Christian and 209 Jewish families. Jews resided mainly within the former town walls, especially at the Market Square and close to the synagogue, while Christians, who mostly earned their living as farmers, had their houses and farms in suburbs.

After the third partition of Poland in 1795 by Russia, Prussia and Austria, Kraśnik was incorporated into the Austrian Empire, and in 1815 – into the Congress Kingdom of Poland, a puppet state under Russian imperial rule. The town met a significant economic boom, which improved the situation of local Jews. In the first half of the 19th c., a second, smaller house of prayers, also still existing, was erected close to the 17th c. synagogue.

During the 19th c., the population of Kraśnik grew from 1,385 in 1810 to about 7,000 at the end of the century. The number of Jews also rose, reaching half of the town population at the beginning of the 20th c. In 1897, Kraśnik was inhabited by 3,261 Jews (49% of all the residents).



The Great Synagogue



*The balcony for women
in the Great Synagogue*



The Small and the Great Synagogues

The Religious Life

In the 19th c., Kraśnik became a significant Chassidic center. There were two major groups of the Chassidim in the town: the supporters of the Tzadik of Góra Kalwaria and the supporters of the Lublin tzadik dynasty of the Eigers. The power of the Chassidic community was so big, that in the middle of the 19th c., they attempted to take over rule in the kehilla. In 1867, the Chassidic fights for electing a rabbi led to serious riots in the town, including arsons. The Russian authorities launched an official inquiry and rabbis from Cracow and Warsaw tried to conciliate the belligerent parties.

In the end of the 19th c., the Chassidim from Lublin started to play a major role in the town. It was the result of the activity of Abraham Eiger, son of Judah Lejb Eiger, a Lublin tzadik and the founder of the dynasty of the Eigers. It was in Kraśnik that Abraham Eiger took his first steps as a Chassidic leader and established his first court. After death of his father, he moved to Lublin and took over leadership of all the Lublin Chassidim.

World War I and the Interwar Period

In 1914, after the outbreak of World War I, Kraśnik and the nearby localities witnessed bloody fights between the Russian and the Austrian army. Several anti-Jewish riots occurred in the town, during which many local Jews suffered heavy losses. The war also brought general impoverishment of the inhabitants.

During the interwar period (1918–1939), Kraśnik became the seat of one of the most influential Jewish communities in the Lublin region. According to the census of 1921, there were 4,200 Jews liv-

ing in Kraśnik, which made 50.6% of all the inhabitants. Before the outbreak of World War II their number grew to 5,000 people.

As of 1930, the Kraśnik Jewish community obtained most of its income from the synagogue donations. Rents for the communal properties, paid by the worshippers, also played a major role in the finances, as well as funds coming from the ritual cattle and poultry slaughter. As far as expenses were concerned, the community was obliged to pay salaries to the employees and cover all the costs of the upkeep of the synagogues, houses of prayers, the ritual bath, the community office and other properties.

The interwar period was the time of the development of the Jewish cultural life in Kraśnik. The Izaak Leib Peretz Jewish Library was established in 1924. The assimilatory tendencies intensified, as a common school for Polish and Jewish children was built in 1935. It was attended by 314 Jewish students in 1939, which made almost 40% of all the pupils.

World War II and the Holocaust

World War II ended the centuries-old history of the Kraśnik Jews. On September 9th, 1939, Germans invaded the town and from the very beginning they started to persecute the Jewish community.

In August 1940, Nazis established a ghetto in Kraśnik. It was inhabited by Jews from the town and nearby places: Annopol, Dzierzkowice, Zakrzówek, and a big group of refugees from devastated Janów Lubelski. As of February 1942, there were 6,000 people in the ghetto. The conditions of living

were extremely bad. People died of hunger and illnesses, but also because of ruining forced labor, imposed by Nazis. The reports written by the Kraśnik Jews, among others by Hersz Broner and Abraham Olender, archived at the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw, are a meaningful testimony of the Jewish lots under the German occupation.

Liquidation of the Kraśnik ghetto began in April 1942. About 2,500 people were taken away to the Bełżec death camp. The next transportations to that camp were carried out in October and November 1942. Nazis placed about 600 people in a forced labor camp in Kraśnik, established in the fall of 1942. The rest of the ghetto inhabitants were moved to the ghetto of Zaklików and later to the Bełżec death camp. During the ultimate liquidation of the ghetto, several hundred people were shot on the Jewish cemetery in Szewska St.

During the German occupation, there were two forced labor camps within the contemporary borders of the town, where Jews from Kraśnik and nearby localities were placed. The bigger camp was established in the fall of 1942 in Budzyń, in the place where today a factory of roller bearings stands. Jews from Kraśnik and Bełżyce were imprisoned there as well as a large group of Jews deported from the Warsaw ghetto. Nazis carried out many mass executions there. In 1944, the Budzyń camp became a subcamp of the Majdanek concentration camp. In the summer of 1944, the prisoners were taken away and placed in different camps in Germany, where some of them managed to survive the war.

The second, smaller camp existed in the place of the today military camp and was called “the camp in Skręt” or “the Wifo-Lager”. Several hundred Jews were imprisoned there. They were at the personal disposal of the SS and police commander of the Lublin District. This camp also witnessed executions, mainly in the spring of 1944, after a group of prisoners had tried to escape and join the partisans. When the front approached Kraśnik, a large number of the camp prisoners were transported into the Third Reich.

Germans devastated all the Jewish cemeteries in Kraśnik. They removed matzevot from the 16th c. cemetery in Podwalna St. and paved Wesoła St. with them. Residential buildings were erected on part of the cemetery, and the rest of it was covered with a vegetable garden and an orchard. Thus the area has been used until today. The cemetery in Strażacka St., established probably in the second half of the 17th c., was also destroyed during the German occupation. In the 1970's, the local authorities created a public square in its place. The most tragic fate met the newest Jewish cemetery, established in the first half of the 19th c. in the Góry suburbs (today in Szewska St.). It became a place of mass executions: on April 12th, 1942 Nazis killed there 64 Jews, and in November 1942 – about 400. Most of the matzevot from the cemetery were used for paving streets and sidewalks.

Only a handful of the Kraśnik Jews survived World War II. Afterwards, most of them left the town or the country. The four-century-old history of the Kraśnik Jewish community was over.

Traces of Presence

Today the most significant mementoes of the past Jewish presence in Kraśnik are two synagogues in Bóźnicza St. and the cemetery in Szewska St.

The most splendid monument of the Jewish culture in Kraśnik is the synagogue called “the Big” or “the Great” (6a Bóźnicza St.), erected in the Baroque style before 1654. It is a building on a square plan of sides of 20 meters each, with a one-storey hall for men in the northeast and a two-storey room in the southwest, with a vestibule and a balcony for women. In the second half of the 19th c., the main room was covered with a vault. Traces of a painted decoration have survived in the interior.

The Small Synagogue (6 Bóźnicza St.), built in the first half of the 19th c. north to the Great Synagogue, was laid out on a rectangular plan with sides of 19.5 and 22 meters. It has a one-storey room in the northwest and a two-storey hall in the southeast. A magnificent, four-pillared bimah (a platform serving as a place of reading of the *Torah*) survived in the main hall of the synagogue.

Both Kraśnik synagogues, although severely devastated by Nazis, fortunately survived the war. After the war was over they were taken over by the Polish State Treasury and served as industrial buildings, which led to their deterioration. After 1945, the Great Synagogue was used by a crafts cooperative. At the same time, the vaults, windows and the floor were removed from the Small Synagogue. In 1948, the interior of the building, at the time used as a trading center, was restored. Some of its windows were bricked up before 1966. In the 1980's, restoration works in both synagogues began and an underground passage joining the buildings was constructed. Unfortunately, the works were given up.

The Kraśnik synagogues were transferred to the Jewish community in 2005. Their current owner is the Foundation for the Preservation of Jewish Heritage in Poland, which, along with the Municipal Council of Kraśnik, has been carrying out activities towards the revitalization of the buildings.

The only Kraśnik Jewish cemetery, which still exists, is the one in Szewska St. Part of matzevot dispersed in the town were gathered on the cemetery by the surviving Jews and served as material for a monument erected in the place of mass executions. The gravestones were concreted and shaped in the form of a platform and an obelisk with inscriptions. After the war, the cemetery was surrounded by a concrete fence, which underwent partial destruction. Part of the matzevot from the Jewish cemeteries of Kraśnik is currently gathered in the Small Synagogue.

| Sławomir Mańko

Activities. Revitalization of the synagogue complex in Kraśnik.

Within the frames of the Chassidic Route project, the Foundation for the Preservation of Jewish Heritage in Poland, in cooperation with the Municipal Council of Kraśnik and with the support of the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, is carrying out the project of revitalizing the synagogue complex in Kraśnik, aiming to create there a cultural center for youths and tourists. It is to become the most important element of the Chassidic Route, along with the synagogue in Zamość.

As a result of social debates, the Foundation for the Preservation of Jewish Heritage in Poland, along with the Municipal Council, prepared a coherent function plan of the synagogue complex, meeting the needs of the local community. That is why the main idea of the center is the promotion of multiculturalism. In the building of the smaller synagogue there will be a modern multimedia library and a lecturers' room, joined with the multimedia Museum of Jews of Kraśnik and the Kraśnik Region. The second, bigger building will combine several functions: it will contain a center for the local non-governmental organizations dealing with culture, and a hall designed for concerts, conferences and exhibitions. One of the annexes for women, located on the balcony of the bigger synagogue, will serve as a working room for art courses. In October 2007, a poetry evening entitled *Song about the Hidden God* took place in the synagogues; it was organized by the Kraśnik Center of Culture and Promotion.

On December 15th, 2007 the Foundation for the Preservation of Jewish Heritage in Poland accomplished work on the first part of technical documentation of the synagogue complex. It was carried out thanks to the financial support of the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage within the framework of the project "Our Multicultural Center Kraśnik – preparation of the documentation enabling the revitalization of the synagogue complex in Kraśnik for cultural purposes". The work, co-financed by the Municipal Council of Kraśnik, will continue in 2008.

The Foundation takes up also numerous educational activities, aiming to involve the inhabitants of Kraśnik in taking care of multicultural heritage of their town. Currently, four Kraśnik schools participate in the "To Bring Memory Back" program, created and implemented by the Foundation. Within the program, young people discover multicultural history of their town, learn about the fates of the Kraśnik Jews as well as Jewish tradition and culture. They also carry out public activities thanks to which the results of their work become available for the inhabitants of the town.

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Text: Sławomir Mańko, Weronika Litwin

Translation: Maciej Gugała
 Consultation: Robert Kawalek
 Editor: Weronika Litwin
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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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