

FOUNDATION FOR
THE PRESERVATION
OF JEWISH HERITAGE
IN POLAND



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Embassy
of the Federal Republic of Germany
Warsaw



Izbica

 a story of a place



The 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). The Foundation operates in areas which are, due to their distance from bigger cities, hard to reach for the local Jewish Communities.

Authorized by the Union of Jewish Communities in Poland the Foundation aims to regain the objects which before the World War II were the property of Jewish Communities and takes care of the relics of the material heritage of the Polish Jews. Our priority is the protection of the cemeteries: in cooperation with other organizations and private donors we saved from destruction, fenced and commemorated several of them (e.g.: the cemeteries in Zakopane, Kozienice, Mszczonow, Klodzko, Iwaniska, Strzegowo, Dubienka, Kolno, Ilza and Wysokie Mazowieckie). The actions of our Foundation cover also the revitalization of the particularly important and valuable landmarks of Jewish heritage, such as, e.g. the synagogues in Zamosc and in Krasnik.

Our heritage preservation activity cannot be limited only to the protection of objects; it is equally important to broaden the public's knowledge about the history of the Jews, who for centuries contributed to Poland's cultural heritage. The "To Bring Memory Back" program is one of the most important educational activities of the Foundation. We hope that thanks to participation in the program, young people will begin not only to discover and appreciate the multicultural heritage of their region, but will also understand how significant are the respect and understanding of other cultures.

more information about the Foundation: www.fodz.pl

Dear Readers,

the publication which you have in your hands is dedicated to the history of **Izbica** – a small town in the Lublin province, until 1942 inhabited almost exclusively by Jews. We have developed it within the framework of the *Izbica Jewish Cemetery Commemoration Project*, which is organized by the Foundation for the Preservation of Jewish Heritage and supported by the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany, as well as by Tvschoenfilm, a German documentary producer. The goal of the project is to restore the cemetery ground and to reconstitute its historical appearance. By the end of 2006 the Foundation had finished the first stage of the project, during which the following results were achieved:

- the matzevot, stolen by the Nazis during World War II and used to build the Gestapo prison in Izbica, were moved back to the cemetery;
- a monument commemorating the Jewish community of Izbica was erected at the cemetery;
- a workshop on Jewish culture was organized for the students of the School Complex in Izbica
- the geodesic boundaries of the cemetery were traced and a new fence was designed.

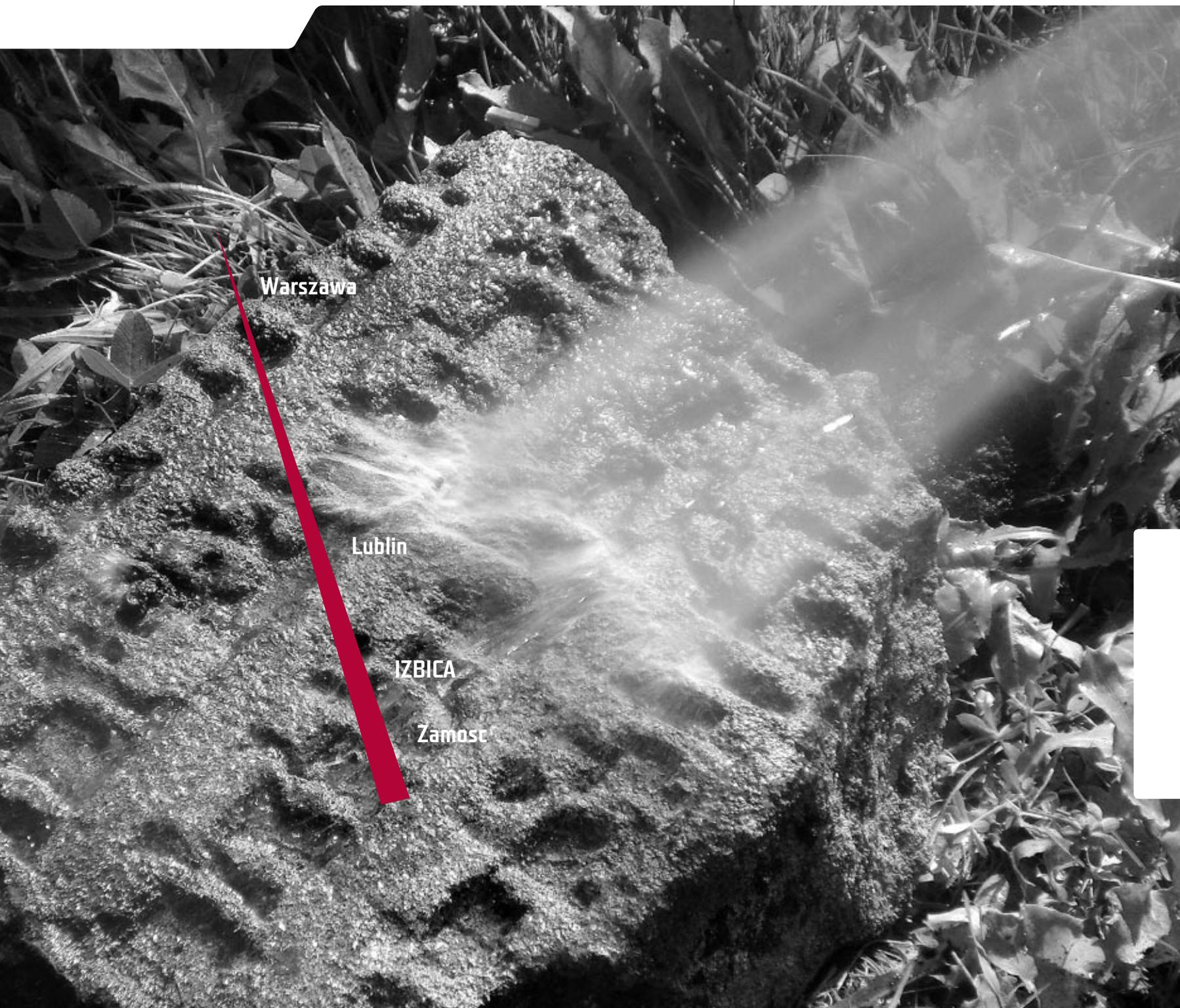
The second stage of the *Izbica Jewish Cemetery Commemoration Project* will be fencing the cemetery ground. The cost of this operation is estimated at 50,000 €. The Foundation is currently looking for partners who will help us to achieve this goal.

The realization of the project would not be possible without the active participation of the Izbica community – above all the teachers and students from the School Complex in Izbica who have been taking care of the cemetery. Their activity has been developed within the framework of the "To Bring Memory Back" educational program launched by our Foundation and in cooperation with a German organization Bildungswerk Stanislaw Hantz based in Kassel. The commemoration project has been acclaimed by the local authorities. The commitment of the inhabitants of Izbica to the protection of the cemetery is a priceless evidence of tolerance, openmindedness, and respect for the people who for 200 years had been creating the history of Izbica.

On behalf of the Foundation for the Preservation of Jewish Heritage, we would also like to express our gratitude for the unwavering support to Jan Jagielski of the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw, and to Robert Kuwałek, Director of the Belzec Memorial Museum, who is the co-writer of this publication.

Monika Krawczyk | CEO





Izbica is a locality in the Krasnystaw district, Lublin province. First references concerning Izbica date back to the 15th century. From 1750 until 1942 Izbica was inhabited almost exclusively by Jews. Only 14 Izbica Jews survived World War II.



→ the Jewish cemetery in Izbica

History of Izbica

Origins of a Jewish town

First references concerning a village named Izbica appear in documents dating back to the 15th century, but its real beginnings should be set in the middle of the 18th century, when the Jews expelled from the nearby town of Tarnogóra have been settled there.

Tarnogóra had the *de non tolerandis Judaeis* privilege, which formally denied the Jews the right to live and trade within the city walls, but regardless of its existence, the Jews have been living in the town since the middle of the 16th century. In the middle of the 17th century even a synagogue had appeared there. It seems very probable that a Jewish community existed in the town, however it is difficult to pinpoint where exactly – and if – there was a Jewish cemetery at that time.

In 1744, by the sentence of the assessor's court, the Jews were evicted from Tarnogóra, probably on the request of the Christian inhabitants – especially merchants and artisans, for whom the Jews were potential competition. The sentence was very restrictive. The expelled Jews were forbidden under the threat of imprisonment to pass through the bridge leading to Tarnogóra and to sell any commodities in the town. Unfortunately, no sources were left for us to follow the execution of the sentence and the stages of eviction. The only thing we know is that the new location for the Jewish settlement was chosen by Antoni Grabowski, starosta and owner of the Tarnogóra estate. It is because of him that the town of Izbica came into existence.

Location of the town, beginnings of the Jewish community

In 1750, the starosta asked the king, August III the Saxon, for the right to found the town of Izbica. Soon thereafter, he let the Jews settle in. Since its very beginnings Izbica was an exclusively Jewish town, a rather exceptional fact in the Republic of Poland. At first Izbica was the smallest town in the country.

Four years after its establishment, when Granowski asked for another privilege (this time for holding fairs in the town) Izbica consisted of 25 Jewish houses, including five inns and three breweries.

There are no sources left from which the beginnings of the Jewish community of Izbica could be reconstructed. It is safe to assume that it wasn't fully formed until the end of the 18th century, as the number of inhabitants grew gradually. In 1781 the town was inhabited already by 72 Jews. A synagogue was not yet built, however there was a house of prayer. In 1810 the number of Jews living in Izbica had grown to 173.

The first Rabbi of Izbica known by name was Eliezer, who died in 1835. He is assumed to be responsible for the organization of the Jewish community in the town. It is possible that a Jewish cemetery had already existed when he arrived (or was elected as Rabbi). When Eliezer was dying, a wooden synagogue was constructed, which was replaced in 1855 by a brick one.

Izbica becomes the town of the "religious anarchist"

After 1835 the town grew quickly. It is at this time that a paved road connecting Lublin and Zamosc was finished. Four years later, Mordechai Josef Leiner, one of the finest Tzadikkim in the Kingdom of Poland and the author of the famous Torah commentary *Mei HaShiloah*, came to Izbica. The pilgrimages of the Chassidic Jews to his court greatly contributed to the economic growth of Izbica, where new inns and shops were built to accommodate them.

Mordechai Josef Leiner was a disciple of the most eminent Tzadikkim of this time – Simcha Binem, called the "Holy Jew of Przysucha", and Menachem Mendel Morgenstern of Kotzk. After a rather stormy parting with the latter, Rabbi Mordechai Josef decided to settle in Izbica. At the time he was already

15th

1419

first references concerning a village named Izbica, which was incorporated into the Catholic parish of Krasnystaw.

18th

1744

by the sentence of the assessor's court the Jews were evicted from Tarnogóra and moved to Izbica.

1750

Tarnogóra's owner, Antoni Granowski, obtained a privilege from the King August III the Saxon for the location of the town of Izbica and the settlement of the Jews expelled from Tarnogóra.

1754

the king issued a privilege allowing for fairs to be held in Izbica. Probably at the same time the Izbica Jewish cemetery was established.

19th

1807

As the result of an agreement between the Austrian government and Duke Adam Kazimierz Czartoryski, the ownership of Tarnogóra, Izbica and the neighborhood was transferred to the Austrian authorities in exchange for the town of Siedlce.

ca. 1808

Ignacy Horodyski bought the Tarnogóra estate from the Austrian government.

1809

Izbica became a part of the Principality of Warsaw. At that time the town had 173 inhabitants, exclusively Jews.

1823

the Tarnogóra estate (Tarnogóra, Ostrzyca, Mchy, Stryjów, Izbica, Ostrowek) was bought by Józef Czyżewski; it remained the family's property until 1945.



→ Izbica Jewish Cemetery Commemoration Project – demolition of the former Gestapo building

known as one of the most eminent and most radical Jewish mystics, and his reputation lasts to this day. Some religion historians have even called him a “religious anarchist”. The main idea of his teachings was that “all people’s activity is in the hands of the Heaven”, and that a man cannot change anything around him without the interference of God. Mordechai Josef Leiner was the founder of a great and influential Chassidic dynasty, known by the name of Izbica-Radzyn. He died in 1854 and was buried at a Jewish cemetery in Izbica; an ohel was constructed on his grave. After his death his position as the head of the Chassidim of Izbica was taken up by his son Jacob, who moved his court to Radzyn Podlaski in 1878. The descendants of the dynasty founder survived the Holocaust and migrated to Israel, where the court and the center of the Izbica-Radzyn Chassidim were reactivated in Bnei Braq near Tel Aviv.

Development of the town

Izbica was growing quickly. In 1860 the number of inhabitants, all of them Jews, was already at 1,450 and the town consisted of 117 houses, mostly wooden. The most impressive building was probably a brick synagogue, standing on the right side of the market, looking from the road from Lublin to Zamosc. There was also the *Bet Midrash* – a house of teaching and prayer – and the Tzadik’s private house of prayer. Twenty years later the population of Izbica was already at 2,047, of which there were only thirty Christians. In 1869 Izbica lost its status of a town due to the repressions after the January Uprising. It is worth reminding that lowering the status of Izbica did not stop its development.

1870 saw the transfer of the local authorities’ seat from Tarnogora to Izbica, as well as the consecutive development of Izbica and further marginalization of Tarnogora. The development of the town was not stopped even by the fire of 1879, which destroyed also the synagogue, quickly rebuilt thanks to the donations of inhabitants. In 1910 the number of inhabitants of Izbica reached 3,400, including 176 non-Jews. The latter were mostly farmers, living on the outskirts of the settlement. The commerce and the

handicraft remained in the Jewish hands. The development of Izbica was not stopped until the World War I. The settlement was partially destroyed during the military operations and many inhabitants decided to leave.

Between the wars

In 1921 the number of inhabitants grew to 3,085, including 2,862 Jews (93% of the population). At that time many political and social organizations surfaced, and the young generation of Izbica Jews found interest in political ideas. Parties like *Mizrachi* (religious Zionist), Zionist Organization, the socialist Bund, or the strongest party in this still traditional society, the orthodox *Agudat Israel*, were created at this time. A number of charitable societies was also created, including *Bikur Cholim* (care for the ill), or *Linas HaCedek* (care for the poor).

Despite those changes Izbica remained a typical Jewish *shtetl* – a town where the life of its inhabitants was concentrated around the synagogue and its rabbi. Until 1931 there was not a single modern school. Schooling was provided by the traditional Talmud-Torah, organized by the Jewish community, and private *chederim*. When the first public school was opened in Izbica, its students consisted mostly of Jewish girls and Christian children. The Jewish boys were still sent to *chederim*.

The predominant language among the Jews of Izbica was Yiddish. Only a few families, who maintained constant contact with Poles, used both Yiddish and Polish. Between the wars another Chassidic court, not as widely known as its predecessor, was created in Izbica by Rabbi Zwi Rabinowitz, descendant of the family of Simcha Binem of Przysucha. The local orthodox fraction was “ruled” by the Chassidic partisans of the Tzadik of Ger.

1835

a road connecting Lublin and Zamosc and running through Izbica was built.

1839

Rabbi Mordechai Joseph Leiner settled in Izbica and established a Chassidic court there.

1854

Rabbi Mordechai Joseph Leiner died. The leadership was taken over by his son, Jacob, who lived in Izbica until 1878 and then moved to Radzyn Podlaski.

1855

in the place of a wooden synagogue, a new brick one was built at the north side of the market square. A few years later a *Bet Midrash*, a house of teaching and prayer, was built.

1860

Izbica had 1,450 inhabitants, almost exclusively Jews; there were a large mill, a lumber mill, a furniture factory and a comb factory in the town.

1869

due to Russian repressions after the January Uprising Izbica lost the status of a town.

1897

Izbica had 3,172 inhabitants, including 3,019 Jews.

WORLD WAR I

the town was partially destroyed as a result of military operations and since 1915 was under Austro-Hungarian occupation. The first Jewish political parties appeared.



→ Izbica Jewish Cemetery Commemoration Project – workshop on Jewish culture for the students in Izbica

The window through which we can take a look at pre-war Izbica is found in the memories of its former inhabitant, Thomas Toivi Blatt: (...) *In Izbica itself there were about 3,600 Jews and two hundred Christians. Most towns people were poor and lived in wooden flats; only a very few, the wealthy, had brick houses. Three artesian pumps and a few wells supplied water. There was no electricity until the mid-1930. The Jews were predominantly Orthodox, but progressive ideas were beginning to take hold. The caftan, beard, earlocks, and scull-cap were beginning to give way to Polish or Western dress. (...) Everybody knew everybody in Izbica, and people were called mostly by nicknames. One or two words often described perfectly someone's beliefs, social standing and family lineage, or physical attributes. There was Łume (Lame) Chaim and Dziobaty (Chicken Pox) Jojne. Everybody knew that „Zamościer baker” was Shulim Handwerker, coming from Zamość. My father was called Leibele goy, because he was a so-called freethinker who ate ham and associated closely with Christians. (...) We lived peacefully with our Catholic neighbors. True, once in a while anti-Semitic slogans like “Jews to Palestine” and “Don't buy from Jews” appeared in the post office, but no one took them seriously. Catholic and Jewish schoolchildren kept mainly to themselves. About half of the students were Jewish and half Catholic, for though the town was over 95 percent Jewish, the children from all the outlying villages attended the town's elementary school. (T.T.Blatt, *From the Ashes of Sobibor. A story of Survival*. Northwestern University Press, 1999)*

World War II

In September 1939 Izbica found itself for a limited time under the Soviet occupation; at this time the Jewish population of the town was 5,098 people. Some young people decided to leave the town with the Soviets. Many of these eventually were deported to Siberia; it is uncertain how many of them survived the war in the depths of the Soviet Union. But most of the population remained in the town and found itself under the Nazi occupation. At the beginning, except for occasional crimes against Jews and the mandated wearing of the Star of David, there were no large scale repressions of the Jewish population. The situation started to change at the end of 1939. Then the transports of Polish Jews resettled from

the western parts of the country – a section of Poland annexed to the Third Reich – started to arrive in Izbica. The newcomers, Jews from Lodz, Głowno and Kalisz, were lodged in the Jewish houses. In 1941 over 1,000 Jews were relocated to Izbica from Lublin. The town was getting short of space.

Practically from the beginning of the occupation there was another problem which harassed the town: famine. While in theory it was not a closed ghetto, Izbica was nonetheless surrounded on three sides by hills, making the town a death trap for the people inside. Those natural borders were marked by the Nazis as lines, the crossing of which meant immediate execution.

In 1941 Izbica became the Gestapo headquarters for the entire Krasnystaw District. The ill-famed Gestapo boss, Kurt Engels, along with his assistant, Ludwik Klemm, moved to the town. The two were responsible for many crimes committed on both Jews and Poles. One of the first “actions” organized by them was destroying the Jewish cemetery in Izbica. The Jews were forced to remove the matzevot, which later served as the material for a newly constructed prison at the Gestapo headquarters (close in location to the present police station). Behind the building Engels and Klemm arranged executions of both Poles and Jews. The Poles were buried at the Catholic cemetery in Tarnogóra, while the Jews – at the Jewish cemetery in Izbica.

In March 1942 commenced the Operation “Reinhardt” – a plan of murdering all the Jews in the General Government. Izbica was chosen as the main and largest transitory ghetto for the Jews from Germany, Austria, Czech Republic and Slovakia. The main reason was the convenient location of the town by the main railway leading to the death camp in Belzec. After the completion of another death camp in Sobibor, the transports from Izbica were also directed there. Between March and May 1942 the Nazis transported to Izbica as many as 11,000-15,000 European Jews. The situation in the ghetto in Izbica was comparable to the one in Warsaw; many people were dying from starvation and diseases.

1921

Izbica had 3,085 inhabitants, including 2,862 Jews (93 % of the population). There were 166 Jewish craftsman workshops there, out of which 108 belonged to tailors.

1924

a Jewish Collective Bank was established.

1931

a public school was established; the majority of students were Jewish girls. The majority of Jewish boys attended *chederim*.

1939

Izbica had 6,000 inhabitants, including 5,098 Jews. From the very first stage of the Nazi occupation transports of Jews relocated by force from the western parts of the country were arriving at Izbica.

1941

over a 1,000 Jews from Lublin and several hundreds from Krasnystaw were relocated to Izbica.

MARCH 15th, 1942

first transport of Jews from Czech and Moravia arrived at Izbica. Until May 1942 the Germans brought to Izbica 11,000-15,000 Jews from Germany, Austria, Czech and Slovakia, who were afterwards deported to death camps in Belzec and Sobibor



→ Izbica Jewish Cemetery Commemoration Project – unveiling of the commemorating monument

→ Izbica Jewish Cemetery Commemoration Project – installing the matzevot at the ohel walls

Overpopulation and hunger were enormous. Because the town had no hospital, the synagogue was transformed into one.

Along with the flow of the European Jews came the deportations of the Polish ones. The first one took place on March 24th, 1942, when the Nazis deported 2,200 local Jews to the death camp in Belzec to make place for the incoming transports. A few days later another 2,500 Jews were deported to Belzec. All deportations were extremely brutal; many people were murdered in the streets, in their houses, and on the train ramp. Their bodies, along with those who died from “natural causes”, were buried in the Jewish cemetery in Izbica, probably in mass graves. It is known, that in the summer of 1942 alone about 1,000 Jews who died or were murdered in Izbica were buried there.

The largest wave of deportations began in October and November 1942. At the same time the Polish Jews from the districts of Zamosc and Krasnystaw were moved to Izbica. It is difficult today to calculate how many people were in the town at that time. The density of the population was so enormous that people had to camp in the streets. During those autumn deportations thousands of people were sent to the death camps in Belzec and Sobibor.

The liquidation of the transitory ghetto in Izbica took place on November 2nd, 1942. About 1,000-2,000 Polish and European Jews were gathered by force into a small firehouse in Izbica, taken to the Jewish cemetery, and then executed and buried in two or three mass graves. They victims were recruited from those, for whom there were not enough places in the transports to the death camps.

This event was not yet the end of the tragic fate of the Jews from Izbica. Many of those who managed to flee from executions and deportations hid in the nearby forests. They were mostly Polish Jews who had no illusions about the fate prepared for them by the Nazis and knew the surroundings well. After the closing of the main ghetto, the Nazis created in Izbica a second, smaller ghetto for ca. 1,000

Jews who left their hiding places. In January 1943 another few hundred people were deported to the death camp in Sobibor. The final act of the tragedy of the ghetto and the Jewish population of Izbica took place on April 28th, 1943, when the remaining 200 Jews were sent on lorries to the death camp in Sobibor. Most of them were immediately sent to gas chambers. After the deportation of the last Jews the synagogue was destroyed. Only a few Jews managed to hide and survive, thanks to the help of their Polish neighbors. Of all members of the Jewish population of Izbica, only 14 survived till the end of the war.

Today only few traces remind about the Jewish presence in Izbica: a pre-war house with a sukah, a railway station which saw trains leaving for death camps and a cemetery, located on a hill by the Lublin-Zamosc road. After the war monuments commemorating victims of the Shoah murdered in Izbica were erected at the cemetery and in 1995-1996 the ohel of Tzadik Mordechai Josef Leiner was rebuilt, however the unattended area resembled rather a garbage dump than a necropolis. It wasn't until methodical cleaning actions undertaken by the students of the School Complex in Izbica, along with the Bildungswerk Stanislaw Hanz organization from Kassel and the Foundation for the Preservation of Jewish Heritage in Poland that the cemetery slowly started to regain its proper look. The School Complex and the Bildungswerk erected informational tablets, while a new monument was erected by the Foundation for the Preservation of Jewish Heritage in Poland and the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany. The activity and dedication of the students from Izbica are a source of hope for the final restoration of memory of the Izbica Jews.

Robert Kuwałek | DIRECTOR OF THE BELZEC MEMORIAL MUSEUM

MARCH 24th, 1942

first deportation from Izbica to Belzec. On that day the Nazis sent ca. 2,200 Polish Jews to the death camp. At the beginning of April, another 2,500 Polish Jews followed their path.

OCTOBER 1942

mass deportations from the transitory ghetto in Izbica to Belzec and Sobibor. At the same time the Polish Jews from the Lublin region were relocated to Izbica.

NOVEMBER 2nd, 1942

liquidation of the transitory ghetto in Izbica. On that day the Germans executed 1,000-2,000 Jews at the Jewish cemetery in Izbica.

JANUARY 1943

a second, smaller ghetto was established in Izbica to accommodate ca. 1,000 Polish Jews who hid themselves outside Izbica when the first ghetto was liquidated.

APRIL 28th 1943

final liquidation of the Izbica ghetto. The last 200 Jews were deported from Izbica to the death camp in Sobibor

JULY 1944

the Soviet Army liberated Izbica. Of all members of the pre-war Jewish community of Izbica only 14 survived the German occupation. From among the thousands deported to Izbica in 1942 only a few people survived until the end of the war.



Izbica Jewish Cemetery Commemoration Project

For nearly 200 years – since the half of the 18th century until 1942 – Izbica was inhabited almost exclusively by Jews. There were but a few comparable towns in Poland, where Jews accounted for at least 90% of the population. The fact that Izbica was founded as a Jewish town makes it even more exceptional.

World War II put an end to the history of Izbica Jews – nowadays the most important trace of their once flourishing community is the cemetery, which only a short time ago had been abandoned and devastated. To save it for the generations to come, the Foundation for the Preservation of Jewish Heritage launched the *Izbica Jewish Cemetery Commemoration Project*, the goal of which is to restore the cemetery and to protect it from further devastation. An integral part of the project is to encourage the inhabitants of Izbica, above all the students of the School Complex in Izbica, to take care of the cemetery.

During the World War II the Jewish cemetery in Izbica was desecrated, its fence was destroyed and the matzevot were used for constructing a Gestapo prison building. In September 2006, the Foundation for the Preservation of Jewish Heritage, along with Tvschoenfilm, demolished the former prison building. When the demolition works were comple-

ted, the matzevot were moved back to the cemetery: those that were best preserved were installed on the walls of the ohel of the famous Tzadik of Izbica, Mordechai Josef Leiner, the others were secured. In the future they will be built into the cemetery's new fence. The works were filmed by Tvschoenfilm; they will be used in a documentary about Kurt Engels, the boss of Gestapo in Izbica and one of the war criminals involved in the "Reinhardt" Operation. The film will be aired by the German ARD Television.

In autumn 2006 the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany had joined forces with the Foundation to realize the *Izbica Jewish Cemetery Commemoration Project*. The financial support of the Embassy made possible the completion of the following goals: a monument commemorating the Jewish community of Izbica was erected at the cemetery, the geodesic boundaries of the cemetery were traced, a new fence was designed and finally – this pamphlet was published and educational activities were organized for the students of the School Complex in Izbica, who for the last few years have been taking care of the cemetery in cooperation with the German organization Bildungswerk Stanislaw Hantz based in Kassel.

On November 16th, 2006, the ceremony of unveiling a monument commemorating the Jewish community of Izbica took place. The ceremony was attended by the Israeli Ambassador, Mr. David Peleg, the



German Ambassador, Mr. Reinhard Schewpe, a representative of the President's Office, Ms. Małgorzata Załuska, the Chief Rabbi of Galicia, Rabbi Edgar Gluck, a deputy bishop of the Lublin Archdiocese, bishop Mieczysław Cisło, representatives of the local authorities and the Izbica Mayor. The ceremony was also witnessed by local citizens and children from the School Complex.

The teachers and students of the School Complex have been taking care of the Jewish cemetery in Izbica for many years, trying to discover the past of their town. In June 2003 the school, with help from Robert Kuwałek, Director of the Belzec Memorial Museum, started cooperating with the German organization Bildungswerk Stanislaw Hantz. An educational program was then created and the students started to explore the history of the Izbica Jewish community, e.g. by interviewing senior inhabitants of the town. A meeting with a person granted with the title of "The Righteous Among the Nations" was held and two literary contests were organized: "The Memory of the Jews from Izbica" and "The Memory of the Jewish sites in Izbica" (winning texts were translated into German and published; Bildungswerk had also offered prizes for its authors).

The students have also visited the former death camps in Belzec and in Sobibor, where, on the 60th anniversary of the prisoners uprising, they left a stone commemorating the Jews from Izbica. One of the girls recited her poem untitled "The Memory Cabinet".

In September 2005 the School Complex in Izbica joined the educational program „To Bring Memory Back”, launched by the Foundation for the Preservation of Jewish Heritage. The school project is coordinated by two teachers: Małgorzata Dudek and Anna Knap.

Within the framework of the program the students take care of the Jewish cemetery, discover Jewish history and culture, and explore the history of the Jewish community of Izbica. They also undertake public activities leading to bring back the memory of the former Izbica citizens. In June 2006 the students have presented the first results of their work during the national showcase of the „To Bring Memory Back” program at the Nozyk Synagogue in Warsaw.

In December 2006 the Foundation organized for the students of the Izbica School Complex a workshop on Jewish culture and history, dedicated also to the educational program's method and the realization of public activities. We certainly hope that thanks to the workshop, led by experienced animators, young people of Izbica will manage to invite many other inhabitants of their town to join them in taking care of the cemetery and exploring the past of Izbica.

The final stage of the *Izbica Jewish Cemetery Commemoration Project* will be fencing the cemetery. The Foundation is now seeking partners who will help us to complete this task.



Bildungswerk Stanislaw Hantz e.V.

Bildungswerk Stanislaw Hantz is a German association, which for ten years has been organizing educational trips to Auschwitz-Birkenau and to the camps in Sobibor, Belzec and Treblinka, and for the last three years also to Lodz and Chelmno. All the trips are attended by the witnesses of the past events, first of all by Stanislaw Hantz, a former Auschwitz prisoner, after whom the association is named.

For the last couple of years Bildungswerk has cooperated intensively with the "Sobibor Stichting" from Holland. Together they organize study trips following the tracks of Operation "Reinhardt", assisted by students from Lublin.

Apart from the above Bildungswerk is also active in other fields. The association is in contact with Polish groups of former prisoners of German concentration camps. The cooperation is based on constant exchange of views concerning current issues, discussions, assistance in obtaining medicines and medical care, joint trips and undertakings. Bildungswerk organizes meetings with historians and former prisoners devoted to the history of the National Socialism. An important aspect of Bildungswerk's activity is publishing analyses and reports concerning the Nazi politics of extermination.

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