

FOUNDATION FOR
THE PRESERVATION
OF JEWISH HERITAGE
IN POLAND



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FUNDACJA
OCHRONY
DZIEDZICTWA
ŻYDOWSKIEGO



Chełm

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 Chełm, 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”?

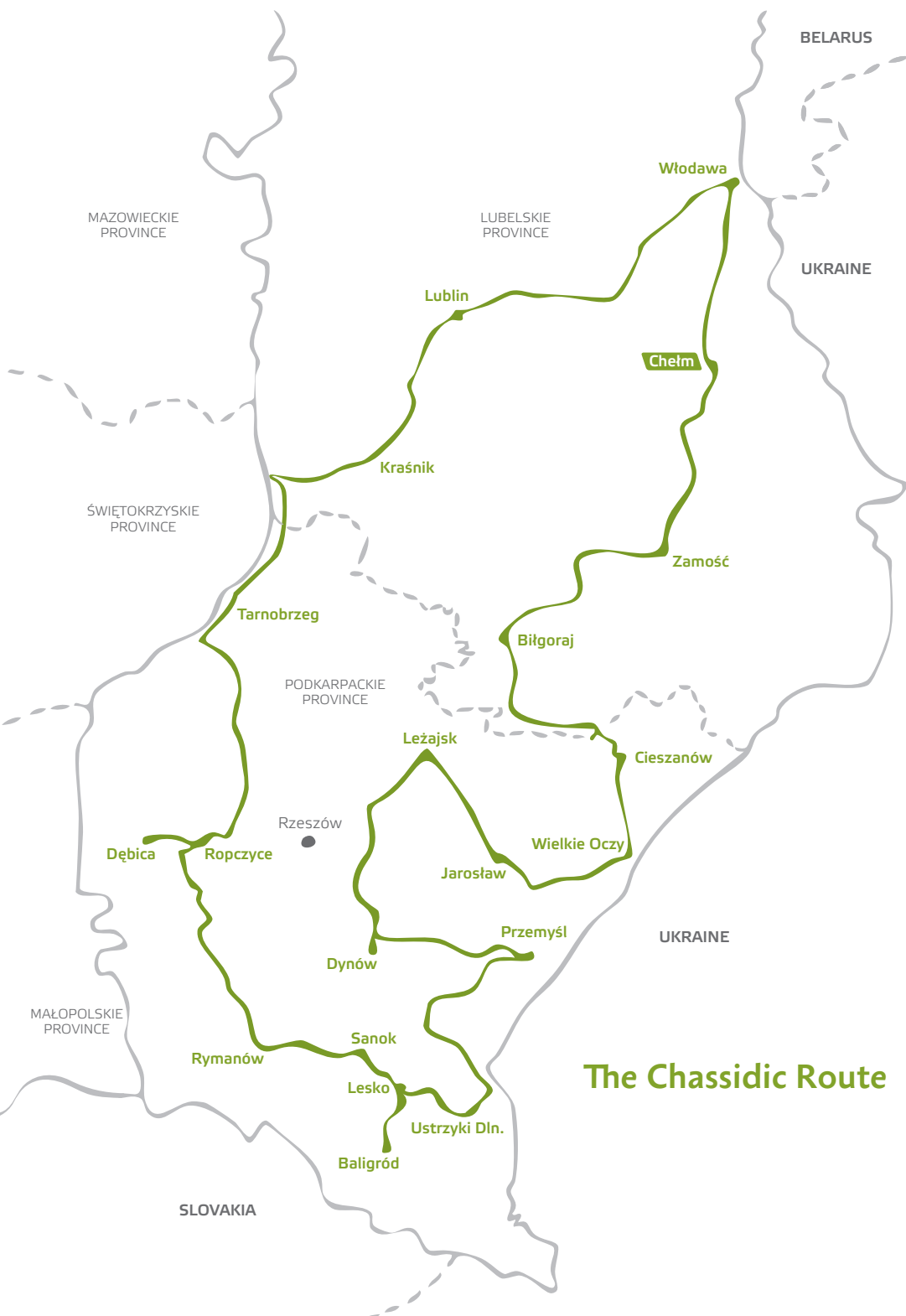
For centuries Poland used to be the homeland to many generations of Jews. An unprecedented development of Jewish culture, as well as religious thought and writing, took place in this country. Here in the 18th c. emerged Chassidism, one of the most important currents in Judaism ever. It gained particularly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



The new synagogue



The new synagogue, present condition

*All roads lead to Chełm,
All the world is one big Chełm*
Isaac Bashevis Singer

Chełm is a town in Lubelskie province, located in the Lublin Upland on the Uherka River, a tributary of the Bug River. It is currently inhabited by almost 68,000 people.

The First Jews in Chełm

It is not clear when Jews arrived to Chełm. It is also unknown, when Chełm became the set of numerous Jewish jokes and anecdotes: “the wise men of Chełm”, as the town residents used to be called ironically, not only are the heroes of traditional wits, but also appear in literature and art. This peculiar fame made many people consider Chełm as a mythical place existing only in tradition and not in reality, while for centuries, Chełm was one of the most important Jewish communities in Poland.

According to a legend, still vivid in the beginning of the 20th c., the oldest gravestone on the Chełm Jewish cemetery was about 700 years old, which would mean that a kehilla (a Jewish religious community) existed in Chełm already in the 13th c., thus it would be 200 years older than the famous kehilla of Lublin. However, the first confirmed references to Jewish settling in the town date back to the 15th c., when entries concerning rich Jewish merchants appeared in documents. At the turn of the 20th c., a gravestone from 1442 was found on the Chełm Jewish cemetery.

The Development of the Jewish Community

In the 16th c., Chełm was already a well-known commercial center on a route joining Polish lands and the Black Sea. At the time, the merchants of Chełm used to trade not only in their hometown, but also at big fairs in Lublin. Documents from 1520 mention Jehuda Aharon of Chełm, called *the doctor of Jewish law*, who was appointed tax collector for the area of the Chełm region by King Sigismund I. The title *doctor of law* suggests that Jehuda Aharon could also be a rabbi.

The first census of the Jewish inhabitants of Chełm dates back to 1550. There were 40 houses with 371 residents registered in the town at the time (compared to 42 Jewish houses in Lublin). Jews did a lot of businesses there: among others they lent money to an Orthodox Christian bishop of Chełm. This can suggest that the community and the kehilla were quite affluent and the relations between Jews and Christians were rather good. One of sources from that period says that a Christian servant of Jehuda Aharon gave birth to his child that was baptized in the Orthodox faith and supported financially by the father. There were, however, tragic events in Chełm as well: in 1580, an armed Christian named Tymosz rushed into the synagogue and hurt four Jews.

A brick synagogue existed in Chełm already in the first half of the 16th c. According to a local tradition, the building occupied by the synagogue had been a property of the Dominicans, who later sold it to the kehilla. This tradition also suggests that the Christian-Jewish relations were good. The synagogue, built in the 16th c. and called “the Old”, stood in the current Szkolna St. and was destroyed during World War II.



The cemetery



The cemetery



The cemetery

Rabbi Elijah ben Yehudah (1514–1583), called Baal Shem, was one of the most renowned Jews of Chełm. He was the author of acclaimed religious works and a famous cabbalist. His fellow worshippers ascribed magic skills to him. Even today legends surrounding him are told. Rabbi Elijah was the protoplast of one of the biggest and best known rabbinic dynasties in Europe – the Ashkenazis. His descendants served as rabbis in Amsterdam, Hamburg, Lviv, and Lublin throughout the 18th and 19th c.

A famous legend concerning Rabbi Elijah ben Yehudah tells a story of a golem created by him; it was a creature made of silt and mud, in which Rabbi Elijah breathed life by saying magical words. The golem was to carry out orders by his master, as the Rabbi used him in household duties. However, the golem was growing bigger day by day and started to scare people. In that case, the Rabbi decided to destroy the creature. He did that in the attic of the Chełm synagogue. The pieces of the golem remained there and the key to the attic was lost. This legend survived in the oral tradition until the 18th c. It was popularized in a written form by a descendant of Elijah, the famous Rabbi Jacob Emden, but at the same time, the Prague Jews adapted the legend and since then it is known worldwide as the tale of the Golem of Prague. In the Romanticism era, the legend was an inspiration to many literary works, among others to *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley.

In the 17th c., the development of the Jewish community of Chełm was interrupted by the Hetman Khmelnitsky uprising. In 1648, the Cossacks invaded the town and massacred the Jewish population. It was then that the famous prayer for the dead, *El Male Rachamim* ("God full of Mercy"), came into creation; it is still said by Jews. After the wars, which struck Poland in the 17th c., Chełm never regained its former glory. Despite that, the number of Jewish residents of the town grew continuously: in the second half of the 18th c., Chełm was inhabited by 1,418 Jews.

The Intellectual and Religious Life of Chełm

The Jewish Chełm was well-known for the scholars of writing, as the town hosted a yeshiva (an institution for religious studies) well-known in Poland. During the sessions of the Council of Four Lands (1788–1792), the central body of Jewish authority in Poland at that time, Jews from Chełm took part in a debate on the reform of Jewry in Poland. The Chełm representatives took a conservative stand, in opposition to their fellow worshippers from nearby Zamość, who were at the time under the influence of the Haskalah (the Jewish Enlightenment) ideology. Hirsch ben Josef, a rabbi from Chełm, stated in public against the plans of reforms, including changes in the traditional Jewish clothing and creating of the lay educational system for the Jewish children. His pamphlet was translated into Polish and given to the representatives. This does not mean, however, that there were no influences of the Haskalah on the Chełm Jews. One of the leaders of the movement was Rabbi Shlomo ben Moshe Chelm, who originated from the town, but left it and moved to Zamość.

Chassidism

One of the reasons for conservatism of the Chełm Jews was a very strong influence of Chassidism, which fully developed there in the beginning of the 19th c. One of the first Chassidic rabbis in the town was Nusan Note, who died there in 1812; legends were told about his piety and miracles. At the time, Chełm was also the place of activity of the well-known Magid of Tuzhisk, a student of the famous Dov Ber of Mezeritch in Volhynia, a foremost theorist and one of the greatest leaders of Chassidism in the 18th c. Chełm became also the place of residence to one of the first rabbis of the Najhauz dynasty of tzadikim from Tomaszów Lubelski; he was called "Tomaszower rebe". The members of this dynasty were officials at the Chełm Rabbinic Office until World War II. The last of them, Izrael Najhauz, was



The cemetery



The cemetery



The cemetery

the communal rabbi until 1939 and was killed by Nazis. At the end of the 19th c., Tzadik Heszal Leiner from the Chassidic dynasty of Izbica-Radzyń established the court in Lubelska St. in Chełm.

Under Partitions

After the partitions of Poland by Russia, Prussia and Austria (1772, 1793, 1795), Chełm was incorporated into the Russian Empire. In the 19th c., Jews made the majority in the town: as of 1856, out of 3,662 inhabitants of Chełm, 2,493 were Jews (68% of the population), compared to 11,887 residents and 6,356 Jews (52.3%) in 1893. Yet, many people, who visited Chełm at that time, used to say that it rather reminded of a provincial shtetl, a small Jewish town, than a big center of Jewish life. The Jews of Chełm were mostly conservative and usually poor, although there were also rich people in the town. Shortly before the outbreak of World War I, Jews made less than half of the town population.

At the turn of the 19th and 20th c., and especially after 1911, Chełm faced a rapid development as the capital of a province sectioned off by Russians. The economic boom of the town affected also the Jewish population, which took an active part in it. It was then that small industrial plants started to appear, like the mills of Lederer and Lemberger. The whole trade in the town was run in fact by Jews. According to memories of a former Chełm inhabitant, there were 80 shops in Lubelska St., the main street of the town, and all of them had Jewish owners.

The Social Life

The Chełm Jews did not establish any significant lay cultural or educational institutions until World War I. The school system was based on a network of cheders (religious primary schools). The yeshiva

functioned as well. The first heralds of modernization of the Jewish life started to appear already before 1914, for example in the form of illegal political movements. In 1904, the *Bund* started its activity in Chełm; it was a Jewish socialist organization, which turned out to be very dynamic and highly influential among Jewish workers and craftsmen. At the same time, the supporters of Zionism commenced their activity in the town.

However, it was not until World War I, when Chełm was under the Austro-Hungarian occupation, that the modern political, cultural and educational Jewish life began to flourish. Political parties functioned openly and lay schools and libraries started to appear. At the time, Szmul Zygielbojm, one of the most eminent *Bund* activists, linked up with Chełm. During World War II, acting as a representative of the Polish Jewry at the Polish Government in Exile in London, he asked many times for the intervention against the murders committed on Jews by Germans. On the night of May 11th and 12th, 1943, having received information about the total liquidation of the Warsaw ghetto, Szmul Zygielbojm sent a protest letter to the President of Poland in Exile and, in an act of desperation, committed suicide.

The Interwar Period

In 1931, there were 13,537 Jews living in Chełm, which made 46.5% of the town inhabitants. As of 1939, the Jewish population reached 15,000 people.

During the interwar period (1918–1939), the Chełm Jewish community owned two synagogues: the so-called “Old” or “Great”, and the “New”, built in 1911. There was also a *Talmud-Torah* (a communal



The cemetery



The cemetery



The cemetery

religious school for boys), in which lay subjects were introduced during the interwar time. The community also owned an orphanage, which before World War II stood in 80 Lubelska St., and an old people's home.

Between 1918 and 1931, the Jewish Middle School with Polish as a lecture language functioned in the town. On the initiative of Jewish political organizations and private persons, other lay schools were established in Chełm, like the primary school in Młodowska St. with Polish as a lecture language. In 1928 the school was named after King Casimir III the Great. Lectures in both Polish and Jewish were given in the school belonging to the Jewish School Organization (CISZO), which had a nature of a public institution and was managed by the activists of the *Bund* and the *Poalej Syjon*. There was also the *Tarbut* school established in 1927, where Hebrew was taught.

During the interwar period, the Jewish press was published in Chełm, and its leading magazine was "Chelmer Sztyme" ("Voice of Chełm") weekly, issued from 1924 to 1939. Three Jewish libraries functioned in the town, named after Bronisław Grosser, Ber Borochow, and Isaac Leib Peretz. The books from the latter survived World War II buried in a cubbyhole in Sienkiewicza St. In 1945, they were dug out and donated to the Jewish library in Łódź. It remains unknown who had hidden the book collection.

Despite the development of the Jewish modern life, Chełm was still a major Chassidic center in the interwar period. There were about 40 shtibls (private Chassidic houses of prayer) in the town, and the largest ones belonged to the supporters of the tzadikim of Bełz, Kock, Radzyń, Góra Kalwaria, and Kazimierz Dolny. Reb Nuchem Twerski, the son of the tzadik of Kazimierz, settled in Chełm and

established his Chassidic court there. There were also two yeshivot under the strong influence of Chassidism in the town: one belonged to the Chassidim of Lubawicze, and the other to the Chassidim of Radzyń. Many Chassidim considered Rabbi Abram Alter Sochaczewski from nearby Rejowiec as their leader.

World War II and the Holocaust

The history of the Jewish community in Chełm was interrupted by the outbreak of World War II. After capturing the town in September 1939, Germans started to persecute Jews and steal Jewish properties. In the end of the month, Germans left Chełm and the Red Army entered the town, greeted with enthusiasm by part of the Jewish inhabitants. After a few weeks, Russians withdrew to East and Germans took over the town again. Several thousand Jews of Chełm left with the Red Army; some of them managed to survive the war in distant parts of the Soviet Union.

After the second capturing of the town, Germans immediately began to torment Jews. They carried out the first mass murder in December 1939. The men of the Jewish families were ordered to gather in the center of the town in Łuczkowskiego Sq., they had their valuable objects confiscated, and then 2,000 people were driven in a so-called march of death 50 km away to Sokal, which was under the Soviet occupation. During the march, the men from Hrubieszów were joined to those from Chełm. About 300 prisoners died from exhaustion or were killed before reaching the destination; most of the victims (250 people) lie in a mass grave in Mojsławice. A large part of people who reached the Soviet occupation zone was killed after Germans had attacked the Soviet Union, while most of those who were deported by Russians to Siberia survived.

A time of brutal persecutions began for 11,000 Jews remaining in Chełm. They were forced to back-breaking work in the town and in nearby camps. Their houses were regularly searched and robbed. A large number of Jews displaced from the Polish territories incorporated into the Third Reich and from Cracow was transported to Chełm.

It was not until the end of 1941 that Germans decided to establish a ghetto in Chełm. The area of the closed Jewish quarter was sectioned off by the streets: Lwowska, Uściługska, Wojsławicka, Pocztowa, and Katowska. A group of Romanies was forced to settle there as well. On the order of Germans, a *Judenrat* (a Jewish Council) was established in the Chełm ghetto; its aim was to supervise Jews from two prewar districts of Chełm and Włodawa. Michel Frenkel headed the Chełm *Judenrat*. The conditions of living in the ghetto were extremely bad: people died of hunger and diseases, and were killed in constant persecutions.

In May 1942, Germans began the action of liquidation of the Chełm ghetto and all the remaining Jewish population in Chełm district. On May 21st and 22nd, 1942, about 4,000 Jews of Chełm were deported to the nearby death camp in Sobibór. They were replaced in the ghetto by about 2,000 Jews transported from Slovakia. In the summer of 1942, the Slovak Jews as well as part of the previous ghetto inhabitants were taken away to Sobibór; during this transportation, particularly many children died. The biggest wave of deportations took place in the fall and the winter of 1942. Many people were forced to march towards Włodawa, from where they were transported to Sobibór. On November 6th, 1942 about 6,000 Chełm Jews were gathered at the Apostles Sending Church and directed to the so-called Rampa Brzeska, from where they were taken away to Sobibór. The journey to the camp, 60 km away from Chełm, lasted almost two days. The train stopped several times, because people continuously tried to escape. Many of them died on the way.

After the November deportations, Germans established a forced labor camp for Jews who remained in the town; about 1,000 people, mostly craftsmen, were kept there. In January and March 1943, the prisoners were transported to the death camp. During the liquidation of the ghetto, on March 31st, 1943, Rabbi Gemaliel Hochman, the successor of Rabbi Najhauz, was murdered together with his family. Rabbi Jehuda Zund Richl from the Chassidic family of the tzadikim of Rzeszów, affiliated with the Bełz dynasty, also died as a martyr. He was called in Chełm *the Rebe of the poor and the workers*.

The Chełm Jews were killed in the area of the very town as well, mostly in the Borek forest, where in 1944 the Jewish prisoners from the Majdanek concentration camp were brought to burn the bodies of hundreds of people murdered there.

Among several thousand Chełm Jews, only a handful managed to survive the war. Those were mainly people who left the town with the Red Army in 1939 and later found themselves in the depths of the Soviet Union, as well as the ones saved by the Polish families. A small group of Jewish craftsmen, kept in the Chełm prison, also survived; they managed to escape when the building was bombed shortly before the Red Army entered the town. They awaited the liberation of Chełm in the ruins of nearby houses.

Right after the town was freed, a group of over 200 Jews came back to Chełm. There were a few surviving prisoners from Sobibór among them; they fled from the camp during the uprising on October 14th, 1943. Nonetheless, most of Jews left the town after 1946. A few families lived there until 1968, when almost all Jews were forced to leave Poland.

Traces of Presence

During the war, Germans not only exterminated the vast majority of the Chełm Jews, but also deliberately destroyed the places bearing testimony of the centuries-old Jewish presence in the town. The Old Synagogue was burnt and demolished already in 1940, and the Jewish cemetery was almost completely devastated. Broken gravestones were used for paving streets near German institutions. In addition, the trees, growing on the cemetery for several centuries, were cut down.

Today, the Jewish presence in Chełm is testified mainly by the New Synagogue in 8 Kopernika St., built in the style of Art Nouveau, and the Jewish cemetery in Kolejowa St., restored in the 1990's thanks to the Chełm Landmanshafts from Israel and the USA.

| Robert Kuwałek

Activities for the Preservation of Jewish Heritage

The monuments of Jewish culture in Chełm, which survived the war, are today in a relatively good condition. Hopefully, the remaining traces of the Chełm Jewish community will remind the future generations about the multicultural past of the town for many years.

The Foundation for the Preservation of Jewish Heritage in Poland has carried out numerous activities to involve the residents of Chełm in taking care of the multicultural heritage of their town. The students of the School Complex No. 6 in Chełm take part in the “To Bring Memory Back” educational program, created and implemented by the Foundation. Within its frames young people discover the multicultural past of their town, learn about the fates of local Jews, the Jewish culture and tradition. They also prepare public events, thanks to which the results of their work become available for the town inhabitants. The students of the School Complex, in cooperation with the “Miasteczko” Association, take care of the Jewish cemetery in Chełm.

The “Miasteczko” Association www.MIASTECZKO.ORG is the partner of the Foundation in the Chassidic Route project implementation. The Association was established in November 2005; its activities refer to the multicultural past of Chełm, concentrating especially on the issues related to the Jewish culture and commemoration of the prewar Jewish community of the town. One of the biggest achievements of the “Miasteczko” Association is the concert of Ida Handel, a known worldwide violinist born before the war in Chełm, which took place in May 2006.

We hope that soon there will be other activities carried out in Chełm, 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.

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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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