

# Lublin's Jewish Heritage Trail

*In the shops, oil lamps and candles were lit. Bearded Jews, dressed in long cloaks and wearing wide boots, moved through the streets on their way to evening prayers... The world beyond Lublin was in turmoil... But here in Lublin one felt only the stability of a long-established community... Old customs prevailed here: the women conducted business and the men studied the Torah.*

(Isaac Bashevis Singer:  
*The Magician of Lublin*)

Robert Kuwatek

## LUBLIN'S JEWISH HERITAGE TRAIL

(approx. 2.5 km long, duration: 3-4 hrs, 13 stops)

For many years Lublin was a symbol of Jewish autonomy where Hebrew and Yiddish culture flourished and where Judaism could develop unhampered. Historiographers repeatedly refer to Lublin as "Polish Jerusalem", and in recent years the name "Jewish Oxford" has likewise been coined pointing to the role the town played in the advent of the Judaic thought.

The first records of the Lublin Jews date back to the second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> c. and coincide with the sojourn of Rabbi Jacob of Trento. His presence indicated the existence of a strong religious community known as *kabal*. At the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> c. a separate Jewish quarter was established at the foot of the castle, mainly on the area of today's Castle Square [Plac Zamkowy]. The famous Lublin trade fairs facilitated the development of Jewish businesses which could soon successfully compete with Christian merchants. The threat must have been significant given the attempts of the latter to restrict enterprising Jewish merchants and eventually secure the royal privilege *De non tolerandis Judaeis* granted by King Sigismund the Elder that forbade them to settle and carry out business activity within the town walls of Lublin. Such measures pushed the Jewish community further away to the Podzamcze district, later to be known as the Jewish Town, and to other suburban settlements including Kalinowszczyzna, which in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries functioned as a separate congregation within the Lublin *kabal*, and in Piaski (an area between today's 1 Maja Street, Bychawski Square and the railway station), known as the Jewish Kazimierz. At the turn of the 16<sup>th</sup> c. Jews also settled at Wieniawa, a small township that was incorporated into Lublin in 1916.

Jews were forbidden to move into the Christian quarters of the town until the act of emancipation of the Jews in the Congress Kingdom adopted in 1862. Following the act, the Lublin Jews returned to the Old Town and to Krakowskie Przedmieście, the main street of the town. However, Podzamcze remained the centre of the Jewish community life until the outbreak of the Second World War.

Jews had always constituted a significant part of Lublin's inhabitants. At times, the Jewish minority was, in fact, a majority on a par with other towns and townships in eastern Poland, which had a distinctive Jewish character. In 1602 one fourth of Lublin's population (8 thousand inhabitants) was reported to be Jewish. In 1865 this figure rose to 12,992, i.e. 59.2% of the population, whereas in 1931 there were 38,937 Jews (34.6%).

While Lublin Jews were traditionally involved in trade and crafts, many of them were doctors, scholars, and rabbis who enjoyed social esteem. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> c. the Jewish intelligentsia also grew in power.

1. With the exception of a section of Kowalska Street, no material traces of the former Jewish town have been preserved to this day. The area of the Castle Square [Plac Zamkowy] and the adjacent fields at the foot of the Castle Hill were the centre of the Jewish quarter in Lublin. This fact is commemorated by a plaque featuring its map, located on the right side of the stairs leading to the Castle. Szeroka Street, also known as the Jewish Street, laid out at the turn of the 15<sup>th</sup> c., cut across today's Castle Square. Until 1942, it constituted the main thoroughfare in this part of the town, and until the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> c. it was a natural extension of the historic commercial tract that led further east to Ruthenia and Lithuania. It is no wonder that Szeroka Street

was an important centre of Jewish trade already in the 16<sup>th</sup> c. and in the seventies of the 19<sup>th</sup> c. the place was earmarked for a regular trade fair known as the Jewish Fair.

Szeroka Street was an important political and administrative centre of the Lublin Jewry, and from the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> c. with the advent of the Hasidic movement, it also became a religious centre. Local tradition has it that the Council of Four Lands – *Va'ad Arba Aratsot* – convened at 19 Szeroka Street. It was the supreme body of authority outside the Diet initially designed for the Jewry of the united Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and from 1623 for Jews who inhabited the Kingdom of Poland. This unique institution in Europe was established in 1580 as a forum on which the representatives of all Jewish communities could make decisions concerning taxation. In time, however, its powers extended to include religious, political and even social matters. Resolutions of the Jewish Parliament had a binding force for all Polish Jews on pain of excommunication. The Jewish Parliament passed decisions on religious and legal matters submitted by Jews from other European countries and settled complaints lodged by Christian merchants against Jewish business partners. Following the war depredations of the Cossacks and Muscovites which the Jewish town suffered in the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> c., the sessions of the Council of Four Lands were moved to other Polish towns, most notably to Łęczna and Jarosław.

In the past Szeroka Street featured three synagogues. One was built in 1638 by Hirsz Doktorowicz, a royal advisor to King Ladislas Vasa, and later taken over by the guild of coppersmiths. A synagogue for tradesmen was situated at 3 Szeroka Street, and at 44 Szeroka Street stood Parnes Synagogue, founded in the 18<sup>th</sup> c. by Abraham Heilpern, Marshal of the Jewish Parliament.

Szeroka Street was the centre of the Lublin Hasidism. At the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> c. Yaakov Yitzkhak, “the Seer of Lublin” and the father of Hasidism in the Kingdom of Poland, established his own court here. He was reported to have foretold the defeat of Napoleon in Russia and the coming of the

Messiah. He made his reputation for attempting to bring on the Messiah during which time he was badly hurt and subsequently died in unclear circumstances. In 1794 a small synagogue for the Lublin *Hasidim* was established at the back of his court where the most distinguished *tzaddikim* were educated. A plaque on the building which now stands in the corner of Castle Square and Tysiąclecia Avenue commemorates the Seer and his synagogue.

Later on another synagogue for the Lublin Hasidic masters was erected at 40 Szeroka Street. Judah Leib Eiger, grandson of the famous Akiba Eiger known as the Gaon of Poznań settled down in Lublin and established his own court. Rebbe Judah Leib, better known as the “Weeping Tzaddik” for his mortifying ideology founded a local dynasty of Hasidic masters who determined the direction of religious thought until the outbreak of the Second World War.

The educational life of the Lublin Jews also concentrated in other areas such as Nadstawna Street, known as “the little street” and running parallel to Szeroka Street. In the inter-bellum period, over twenty *chederim*, Jewish elementary schools, operated in the area teaching Hebrew and the Pentateuch (the *Torah*).

The way to Lublin Castle led through the densely populated and picturesquely located Castle Street. From the south, the castle was accessible through Podzamcze Street with its synagogue of Saul Wahl, the legendary Polish king who reigned for a single day, and Krawiecka Street [tailors’ quarter] – the most impoverished street of the Jewish town.

In the inter-bellum period, the oldest part of the Jewish town was also the poorest district of the city. Jewish petty merchants and craftsmen lived in overpopulated homes and in substandard living conditions. During the German occupation the area was the centre of the Lublin ghetto. In the years 1942-1943, the Nazis forced the prisoners from the concentration camp at Majdanek to demolish the entire Jewish quarter.

2. The history of the Lublin Jews is strictly connected with the Castle, whose walls towered above the Jewish town. The castle was the residence of the Lublin *starostas*, local representatives of the royal authority who had jurisdiction over local Jewish communities.

At the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> c. Lublin Castle was rebuilt and transformed into a prison. Its prisoners also included Jews who were sentenced for minor offences and for political activity, most notably after the national uprisings in the 19<sup>th</sup> c. Many Jews were imprisoned during the revolution of 1905 when the tsarist authorities attempted to destroy the Jewish communist movement. In the inter-bellum period the castle prison was filled with Polish and Jewish communist activists.

During the Second World War the Gestapo imprisoned many members of Jewish political parties who continued their activity underground, including Bela Shapiro, the local leader of *Bund* – the Jewish Workers' League, and town councillor, who was probably murdered there. A similar fate was shared by those Jews who were caught for failing to wear the armband with the star of David or those who left the ghetto. The Nazis imprisoned hundreds of Jews who sought shelter on the Aryan side during the liquidation of the ghetto in March and April 1942. They were subsequently machine-gunned to death in two mass executions in Górkę Czechowskie. Others were killed on 22 July 1944, a few hours before the Soviet army moved into Lublin. The victims of the execution included the last group of over one hundred Jewish craftsmen who were detained by the Gestapo in an enforced labour camp. A few Jews were also found among the prisoners of conscience who did not accept the post war reality and served their term until 1954 when the Security Service, which ironically employed many individuals of Jewish origin, had its prison in the castle.

Today the Castle houses the Lublin Museum featuring Jan Matejko's canvas entitled "Admission of the Jews to Poland". The picture presents the arrival of the first group of Jews in Poland in 1096 under the reign of Prince Ladislas Herman.

The collection of paintings also includes works of other Jewish artists who came from Lublin or were connected with the city. Among them are paintings of Symcha Binem Trachter, Henryk Lewensztadt, and Yehuda Razgour and sketches by Roman Kramsztyk, Natan Szpigiel and Jan Gotard.

The northern slope of the Castle Hill contains the ruins of a tower traditionally known as **the Jewish tower**. The name may derive from its location above the Jewish town and the Great Synagogue. Another theory suggests that the tower was looked after by the Lublin Jews.

3. At the foot of the Castle Hill, on its northern side, stood, as late as 1942, the **Great Lublin Synagogue**, also known as *Marashal-shul*, now commemorated by a plaque.

Here is the site of an entire synagogue complex including *Marashal-shul* named after eminent Rabbi Shlomo Luria, a.k.a. Marashal, *Maharam-shul* - Minor Synagogue (founded by Mair ben Gedali, also called Lubliner Mair, and a small synagogue for everyday prayers which is referred to in the 19<sup>th</sup> c. historical documents as *Shive Kriyem*. The complex was erected under the royal privilege of 1567 allowing Jews to build stone synagogues. The Lublin *kabal* received a building permit to erect a synagogue and a yeshiva on the plot that belonged to Dr. Isaac May and located in Jateczna Street. Shlomo Luria became the first rector of the Jewish university whose fame attracted Jewish students from all over Europe.

The original building of the Marashal-shul was built in the Renaissance and Baroque styles. Unfortunately, no visual records have been preserved to this day. The synagogue and yeshiva complex was destroyed during the raid of Cossacks and Muscovites in 1655. The synagogue complex was subsequently rebuilt and served its function until 1854 when the ceiling collapsed. Renovation works continued throughout 1864, and the synagogue lost much of its Baroque character. Nevertheless, it retained its rich and historic interior decor thanks to the contributions of wealthy Jews from Lublin. The

two-storey synagogue, which accommodated 3000 worshippers, was an ideal venue for religious celebrations and concerts of distinguished cantors. Maharam-shul was predominantly used for Sabbath prayers.

The adjacent building comprised a community elementary school for poor children, or the so called Talmud-Torah, established in 1862, and a community house for prayer and study established in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> c. – *Beth Hamidrash de Kabal*.

In 1939 under the order of the Nazis, all the synagogues were closed down for religious purposes. Until March 1942 they housed a shelter for refugees and displaced persons and a canteen for the poorest inhabitants of the Jewish ghetto. When the ghetto was liquidated in March and April 1942, the Great Synagogue became a collection point for the Jews deported to the extermination camp at Belzec. Those who escaped murder were escorted at gun point across Kalinowszczyzna Street to the railway ramp of the municipal abattoir from which they were transported to Belzec. Following the liquidation of the Jewish ghetto, the Nazis began the demolition of the synagogue complex. Its ruins were finally removed when Al. Tysiąclecia thoroughfare was designed.

4. Walking in the northerly direction towards Kalinowszczyzna Street one passes the former Franciscan monastery and the Salesian Fathers' church to get to the Grodzisko hill [stronghold] where in the first half of the 16<sup>th</sup> c. (or even earlier) the Lublin Jewish community set up its graveyard, commonly known as **the Old Jewish Cemetery** [Stary Kirkut]. This is reputed to be the oldest Jewish graveyard in Poland and one of the most precious historical monuments in Lublin known throughout the world.

In the early medieval times a wooden stronghold stood on the Grodzisko hill, hence its name. It is not known when the place came to be used as a burial ground. Historical records and literature indicate that at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> c. some of the tombstones dated back to the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> c.

The oldest *matzevah* (tombstone) which has been preserved to this day was erected in 1541 to commemorate the death of Jacob Kopelman ben Jehuda ha-Levi – the oldest Jewish tombstone in Poland.

Many distinguished sons of the local Jewish community are buried here including Rabbi Shalom Shahna, Shlomo Luria, and Yaakov Yitzkhak – the Seer of Lublin. The *matzevah* of the latter, which dates back to 1815, has been additionally protected with a metal frame usually placed around the tombs of the most eminent rabbis and *tzaddikim*.

Since the Old Cemetery served its purpose uninterruptedly from the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> c., it is a unique monument to Jewish art connected with burial ceremonies. Each of the preserved *matzevot* is an individual masterpiece of stonework. Regrettably, lack of awareness and sheer vandalism has had a detrimental effect on the site in recent times.

During the Second World War the cemetery became a place of mass executions of the Jewish and Polish prisoners kept in the Lublin Castle. The local intelligentsia from the entire Lublin region fell victim to the atrocities of the war on 23 December 1939. A commemorative plaque is placed on the wall surrounding the cemetery from Kalinowszczyzna Street.

At the foot of the graveyard hill facing Sienna Street stands the building of the former Jewish Hospital which was closed down in 1886.

The Jewish trail leads from the Jewish Cemetery through **Isaac Bashevis Singer's Square** to Podzamcze Street. Although this eminent author writing in Yiddish and Nobel Prize winner for literature in 1978 did not have any family ties with Lublin, he makes many references to it in his short stories and novels. *The Magician of Lublin* or *Satan in Goray* are among his most popular novels in Poland and in the world.

Located 80 km south of Lublin, Bilgoraj was closer to I.B. Singer, since it was his mother's hometown, and his grandfather, Jacob Mordkhe Zilberman, was a distinguished rabbi there. The writer spent his childhood and formative

years in Biłgoraj, and his life among the Jews in the Lublin region is movingly depicted in his writing.

5. Passing I.B. Singer's Square, the Jewish trail leads straight into Podzamcze Street, formerly known as Franciszkańska Street (before the war Podzamcze Street was located in the Jewish town) and then into Walecznych Street to take us to **the New Jewish Cemetery** established in 1829. At the beginning people were reluctant to bury their loved ones there, but with the outbreak of cholera in 1831 the cemetery became one of the largest Jewish burying grounds in Poland. Many distinguished Jews were buried there, including Rabbi Yehoshua Heshel Ashkenazi, who died in 1867. During his lifetime he participated in patriotic services delivered in the Lublin Cathedral. Ashkenazi was the grandfather of Szymon Aszkenazy, an eminent Jewish-Polish historian. The cemetery also features the tombstone of Dr. Marek Arnstein, an esteemed social activist and husband of a Lublin poet – Franciszka Arnstein (Arnsztajnowa).

During the First World War many Jewish soldiers were buried here – soldiers of the Russian, Austro-Hungarian and German armies. Unfortunately, only one tombstone from that time has been preserved. It is now in private hands.

The New Jewish Cemetery was totally devastated by the Nazis after 1942. The *matzevot* were used for paving the so called Death Road in the concentration camp at Majdanek.

The cemetery is now used by the local Jewish community as a burial ground beside the monuments commemorating the Holocaust of the Lublin Jews and tombstones of Jewish soldiers who served in the Polish Army in the years 1944–1945. Meir Shapiro, founder of *Yeshivat Hakhmei Lublin*, was also buried here - the empty *obel* of his tombstone has been preserved. In recent years the *obel* of the Eigers, a dynasty of *tzaddikim* from Lublin, has been rebuilt. It is located in the part adjacent to Anders Street. Another monument built recently in the form of a graveyard wall commemorates 190 Jews murdered during the liquidation of the ghetto at Majdan Tatarski.

At the end of the eighties, largely thanks to Sara and Manfred Frenkel Foundation, the New Jewish Cemetery was finally renovated. It is now surrounded with a wall in the shape of broken *matzevot* with commemorative plaques mounted at the back by the descendants of the Lublin Jews. The Memorial Chamber and a small synagogue at the entrance commemorate their founders – the Bass and Frenkel families. The Memorial Chamber is devoted to the history of the Jewish cemeteries in Lublin. The surrounding wall and the synagogue were designed by Stanisław Machnik, an architect from Lublin.

The New Jewish Cemetery also extends on the other side of Anders Street with fragments of original graveyard wall. In the middle stands a monument with the ashes of Lublin Jews murdered during the Second World War. It was here that Poles and Jews were executed and buried.

6. Further down Unicka Street on the corner with Lubartowska Street stands an imposing building of Collegium Maius which in the years 1930–1939 was the seat of ***Yeshivah Hakhmei Lublin – The Academy of Sages of Lublin***.

*The Yeshivah Hakhmei Lublin* was founded by Meir Shapiro, a religious leader and political activist, representative of *Agudat Israel*, a Jewish Orthodox Party, in the Polish Parliament. This Talmudic Academy that drew on the old Polish traditions was built thanks to the contributions made by Jews from all over the world. Each home of religious Jews in Lublin made a donation, and Szmul Ajchenbaum, a local industrialist, donated the plot for the building.

The Yeshivah Hakhmei Lublin was regarded as the best equipped academy of its kind in the world. It boasted a rich collection of books including documents in Hebrew dating back to the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> c. Most of publicly burnt at the Podzamcze market by the Nazis, and the few books that remained were kept during the German occupation in H. Łopaciński Voivodship Library. However, they all disappeared after the liberation. The university also had a model of the temple in Jerusalem. The lectu-

re room (preserved to this day and available to visitors) could function as a synagogue, so Rabbi Shapiro delivered lectures to his students and on Shabbat religious services were held. There is still the balcony that was reserved for women.

After the war the building was handed over to the Medical Academy. The library of Collegium Maius has a separate Memorial Chamber and a small prayer room for Jewish groups. The key to the chamber and to the lecture hall is available at the porter's lodge.

7. Behind the wall that surrounds the university and in the direction of Lubartowska Street stands the building of the former **Jewish Hospital** built in 1886 from the contributions of the Jewish Religious Congregation and individual donations of wealthy Lublin Jews. The building also comprised a small synagogue. In 1939, despite financial hardships, the hospital was by far the best equipped facility in Poland. Dr. Benjamin Tec, graduate of the University in Tartu, Estonia, was its first director. The medical staff included such prominent doctors as Marek Arnstein, Jakub Cynberg, Mojżesz Zajdenman, Salomon Prussak, Nison Plotkin, and Henryk Mandelbaum – the last director before the outbreak of the Second World War, father of Professor Krystyna Modrzewska who was forced to leave Poland in 1968.

Although the Nazis seized most of its modern equipment, the hospital remained the main health care facility in the Lublin ghetto until its brutal liquidation on 30 March 1942. Many patients and staff were murdered on the premises, and those who remained were transported to the village of Dys and machine-gunned. The Jewish Hospital became a field hospital for *Wehrmacht* soldiers.

After the war the hospital was transformed into a maternity clinic. The commemorative plaque on the front wall informs about the history of the place.

Further down the corner of Lubartowska and Czwartek Streets stands a modern building currently occupied by the Regional Health Care Authorities. Built in the years 1937 – 1939 it was to house

**Y.L. Peretz Centre of Jewish Culture.** The original idea of the centre came from the group of Jewish socialist activists, members of the Bund, the Jewish Workers' League.

Ber Borocho Elementary School in Ruska Street established by the local committee of the Bund operated until 1936 offering classes in Polish and Yiddish. After closing down, a decision was made to establish another school that would also comprise a cultural centre, library and theatre. The building of the centre was possible thanks to the generosity of the local Jewish community and Jews who managed to emigrate from Poland. The scope of work was so extensive that the inhabitants of Lublin remarked jokingly about the growing rival of the nearby Jewish university. The opening ceremony was scheduled for 1 September 1939...

Y.L. Peretz Centre of Jewish Culture was opened after the liberation in 1944 and functioned as a shelter for Jews who survived the Holocaust and those who returned from the East. Adjacent to the Centre was an elementary school founded by the activists of Po'alei Zion, the Jewish Communist Party, offering classes in Polish and Yiddish. The school was liquidated in 1949 when the state authorities put an end to the development of the Jewish political life. A commemorative plaque on the front wall of the building informs of the history of the place.

The Jewish trail continues along Lubartowska Street towards the city centre. Designed in the 19<sup>th</sup> c., Lubartowska Street was located in the new part of the Jewish quarter. It was commonly called the Lublin Nalewki demonstrating many similarities with the Jewish commercial centre in Warsaw in the period between the wars. Here, beside discount shops, Jewish traders operated elegant retail outlets and wholesale businesses. It was a bustling commercial centre with a special atmosphere succinctly described in Róża Fiszman-Sznajdman's book *My Lublin* published in 1989. During the German occupation the left side of Lubartowska Street marked the western border of the Jewish ghetto.

9. Further up the street on its right side at number 8 is the only operating synagogue in Lublin – **Hevra Nosim**. The synagogue occupies the first floor of the building as it did before the war. Enter the gate from the street and you will find the door leading upstairs on your right.

Initially built as a private home of prayer, the synagogue was established in 1889. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> c. there were about a hundred prayer homes, some located in private flats. In 1905 the owners of the apartment building bequeathed the synagogue to the Jewish Religious Congregation on condition that the legacy could not change its original designation. During the inter-bellum period the building functioned as a house of study and prayer of *Hevra Nosim*, the Jewish Funeral Society.

The synagogue survived the war only because it was located outside the Jewish ghetto. After the war regular religious services were held in the synagogue until the beginning of the eighties when the *minyan*, or ten pious Jews, gathered for prayers and rites. Today religious services are rarely held, and the synagogue functions rather as the Memorial Chamber of the Lublin Jews featuring a collection of photos that depict the life of Lublin Jews before and during the war. There is also a special plaque attached to the wall to commemorate Poles who helped Jews survive the Holocaust. The interior of the synagogue is designed to demonstrate the most important traditions of Judaism. There is a collection of religious publications dating back to the 19<sup>th</sup> c. including some books that belonged to the library of the Talmudic Academy.

The *Hevra Nosim* synagogue is the seat of the Jewish Social and Cultural Society in Lublin where members of the local Jewish Religious Congregation meet. It is also the seat of the Jewish Heritage Society which organises meetings to celebrate the most important Jewish holidays – Pesach, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur and Hanukkah. The synagogue is open to the public every Sunday from 10:00 to 13:00.

10. The Jewish trail continues up Lubartowska Street towards the Town Hall. Here, on the right side is a square known as the Square of the **Victims of the Ghetto**. In the middle of the square stands the **Monument to the Victims of the Lublin Ghetto** unveiled in 1962 to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the Holocaust in Lublin. Designed in the form of a *matzevah*, it contains an inscription taken from a poem of a Jewish poet Yitzhak Katzenelson: “Seeking my dear and near in each handful of ashes”. The base of the memorial contains a list of labour and extermination camps to which Jews were transported during the war (Bełżec, Sobibór, Treblinka, Majdanek, Trawniki, Poniatowa, Budzyń, and Zamość).

The location of the monument is not strictly connected with the Lublin ghetto. Before the war this area served as the so called Polish Trade Fair and during the war the Nazis placed billboards with pictures demonstrating the victories of the German army in Europe. The entry to the Lublin ghetto established in March 1941 was on the corner of Kowalska and Lubartowska Streets, and it covered an area from Grodzka Street to Unicka Street and the entire Podzamcze district. The ghetto was inhabited by about 40 000 Jews from Lublin and its vicinity, as well as from Łódź, Sieradz, Kalisz, Szczecin and Berlin. After its liquidation between 17 March and 16 April 1942, about 28 000 Jews were deported to the extermination camp at Bełżec, 2 500 Jews were murdered on the spot, and those who escaped imminent death were transported to a transition camp at Majdan Tatarski established on 9 November 1942. However, only a handful of Jews did not share the fate of Majdanek victims.

The location of the monument was a compromise to which the communist municipal authorities agreed in the sixties.

11. The next stop on the Jewish trail is on the corner of Noworybna and Rybna Streets, just off Lubartowska Street. Here from August 1944 was the seat of **the Central Jewish Committee in Poland** and **the Voivodship Committee of Jews in Lu-**

**blin.** The former operated in Lublin until January 1945 when it moved to Warsaw. The Voivodship Committee operated in Lublin until 1949.

Until 1945 there were about 3 000 Jews in Lublin, although only 30 people revealed their identity in the first weeks following liberation, i.e. after 22 July 1944. Others remained outside Lublin or decided to return to the Soviet Union. Many attempts were made to reactivate Jewish life in an independent Poland: a Jewish school was reopened, accounts of the Holocaust survivors were collected and the Jewish newspaper was revived. However, subsequent waves of emigration, particularly after the pogrom in Kielce in 1946 dramatically reduced the number of the Jewish inhabitants in Lublin. In 1948 only 500 Jews were reported to live here. Those who left for Israel, the US or France established associations with the aim of keeping the memory of the Lublin Jews alive. The last wave of emigration occurred as a result of anti-Semitic campaign in Poland in 1968. Today there are but a handful of Jews living in Lublin.

Rybna Street takes you to the Old Town Market where the Crown Tribunal is located. Jews were wary of this institution, since in the past many disputes involving Jews were settled including the blood libel accusation cases. Here in the burgher house at 8 Rynek Street, also known as the House of the Lubomelski Family, was the official seat of the Lublin Rabbinical Authorities in the years 1900–1941 and the rabbinical court of law – *bet-din* – which had jurisdiction over the matters of religion and conduct.

**12.** In the years 1867–1942 the house at 11 Grodzka Street, on the corner of the Plac po Farze Square, was the seat of the **Nursery for Jewish Children**, a.k.a. **“The Shelter” Home for the Aged and the Disabled** and the office of the **Jewish Religious Congregation in Lublin**.

The shelter for Jewish children, established in 1857 in Podzamcze Street, was funded by Berek Cwajg, a shoemaker. After the January Uprising in 1864 the Russians seized the building that had originally belonged to the Roman

Catholic Church, and the shelter was moved to the house in Grodzka Street which also accommodated the offices of the Jewish Religious Congregation. Thanks to the financial support of the local Jews, the shelter operated an elementary school for Jewish children and assisted them in obtaining vocational training.

During the German occupation the functions of the Jewish Religious Congregation were taken over by the Jewish Council – *Judenrat* – which represented the local Jewish community before the German authorities.

On 31 March 1942 the children and the elderly from the Jewish shelter were transported to the Tatory meadows on the outskirts of Lublin and executed by the Nazis. Such was the fate of the teaching staff who accompanied the children at their own request. On the same date several officers of the *Judenrat*, including its Chairman Henryk Bekker, were deported to the extermination camp at Belżec. During the liquidation of the Jewish ghetto the square opposite the shelter was used by the Nazis to select Jews for deportation to the concentration camps.

A commemorative plaque is attached to the front wall of the building which now houses the Youth Cultural Centre.

**13.** The Jewish trail ends at **Grodzka Gate, also known as the Jewish Gate** which separated the Christian part of the town from the Jewish quarter. After the act of emancipation of Polish Jews in 1862, they were free to settle down in the Old Town and in other districts of Lublin. It was not long before Grodzka Street became the epitome of Jewishness. Inside Grodzka Gate Jewish traders set up their petty shops the entrance to which functioned as a display window and a counter at the same time. Today it is the seat of Theatre NN – Grodzka Gate Centre which, among other things, promotes the history of the Lublin Jews. The centre boasts an interesting multimedia exhibition of the Old Town and Podzamcze Street before 1939 and a model of the former urban structure of the place. The centre collects accounts of the inhabitants of Lublin who can still recall the history of its Jewish quarter.

Next door is “Szeroka 28” famous for its local Jewish cuisine. The interior decoration of the restaurant is in a traditional Jewish-Polish style, and it is the best place to relax after completing the entire Jewish trail which begins on the other side of Grodzka Gate.

## OTHER TRACES OF JEWISH CULTURE AND HISTORY

### OUTSIDE THE JEWISH HERITAGE TRAIL

There are many other places connected with the presence and history of Jews in Lublin. Unfortunately, the once splendid synagogues in Kalinowszczyzna, Wieniawa and Piaski have not survived. In Piaski (1 Maja Street) where a brick synagogue was built in 1864 in place of a wooden synagogue dating back to the 18<sup>th</sup> c., stands a Polish National church. The **commemorative plaque** inside the church informs us about the synagogue which was demolished following a fire that broke out after the war. There are no traces of the Jewish graveyard in Wieniawa which was destroyed by the Nazis to make way for an SS sports stadium built by Jewish prisoners from the **Sportplatz** labour camp. Today the facility belongs to the “Lublinianka” Military Sports Club.

In the years 1940–1943 the place between the Protestant Cemetery and Maria Curie-Skłodowska Street was occupied by a **P.O.W. camp for Jewish soldiers in the Polish Army**. The prisoners were machine-gunned on 3 November 1943 in what was the biggest execution of Jews in the concentration camp at Majdanek. In the years

1942–1943 the building which now houses Collegium Anatomicum was the headquarters of “**Reinhard Campaign**” led by Odilo Globocnik, the ill famed Commander of SS and Military Police in the Lublin Region. Here decisions were made to establish extermination camps at Belżec, Sobibór and Treblinka and the plans for the Holocaust in the *General Government*.

A **labour camp for Jews**, part of the “Reinhard Campaign,” was located on the corner of today’s Droga Męczenników Majdanka and Wrońska Streets. The former Plage-Laškiewicz Aeroplane Factory was transformed into the SS Clothing Works, which in the years 1942–1942 employed Jewish prisoners to sort the property of the victims of extermination camps at Belżec, Sobibór, and Treblinka. After the liquidation of the ghettos in Warsaw and Białystok, the **Flugplatz** was a place where preliminary selection of Jews took place and where the majority of prisoners were directed to the concentration camp at Majdanek.

In the period from 20 April to 9 November 1942 a **temporary ghetto for the Lublin Jews** was situated at Majdan Tatarski on the outskirts of Lublin in the proximity to the Flugplatz. It is estimated that over 4 000 Jews employed in German companies were stationed there. However, the number of people who went through the ghetto was far greater. Most of them were murdered at Majdanek.

The **concentration camp at Majdanek**, where nearly 50% of prisoners sent there from other European countries were of Jewish origin, was the most tragic place of extermination and martyrdom in Lublin. In 1944 the Majdanek State Museum was established to honour and commemorate its victims and to make the camp, or what remained of it after its liquidation, available as a public remembrance. The bathhouse, gas chambers, crematorium and barracks with a permanent historical exhibition bear witness to the atrocities of the war.

## PRACTICAL INFORMATION

- **Lublin Tourist Information Centre** – 20-113 Lublin, ul. Jezuicka 1/3 (Old Town), tel: 081 532 44 12.
- **Lublin Museum** (at the Castle) – 20-117 Lublin, ul. Zamkowa 9, tel: 081 532 50 01, fax: 532 17 43. The museum is open Wednesday to Saturday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Sunday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- **Old Jewish Cemetery** – ul. Kalinowszczyzna (on the corner of ul. Sienna); open daily except for the Sabbath (i.e. from the sunset on Friday to the sunset on Saturday). Contact Józef Honig at his flat at ul. Dembowskiego 4, tel: 081 747 86 76. He has the key to the gate and will show you around.
- **New Jewish Cemetery** – ul. Walecznych (on the corner of ul. Unicka); The graveyard can be visited daily at any time during daylight. The Mausoleum of the Frenkl Family features a small prayer room and a historical exhibition. The guards of the cemetery have the key.
- **Yeshivah Hakhmei Lublin** – currently Collegium Maius of the Medical Academy; 20-123 Lublin, ul. Lubartowska 85; tel: 081 747 41 48; the keys to the lecture hall which functioned as a synagogue before the war and to a small memorial chamber are available at the porter's lodge.
- **Hevra Nosim synagogue and the Memorial Chamber of the Lublin Jews** – 20-084 Lublin, ul. Lubartowska 10 (entry through the gate at No. 8 from the street). Open Sunday from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., on other days by appointment with Roman Litman, tel: 081 525 01 41.
- **Ośrodek Brama Grodzka – Teatr NN [Grodzka Gate Centre – NN Theatre]** – exhibition and model of the Old Town and Podzamcze Street; 20-112 Lublin, ul. Grodzka 5a, tel: 081 532 58 67, [www.tnn.lublin.pl](http://www.tnn.lublin.pl). Open daily from noon to 3 p.m. upon earlier telephone booking. Tickets: PLN 3.00 and 2.00.
- **Majdanek State Museum** – 20-325 Lublin, ul. Droga Męczenników Majdanka 67, tel: 081 744 26 47 and 744 19 55; [www.majdanek.pl](http://www.majdanek.pl). Open daily except Mondays and holidays from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. (October to April till 4 p.m.). Guided tours in English, German and Russian available upon earlier telephone booking. Prices for groups: PLN 60.00 – in Polish, PLN 100.00 in other languages; a documentary about the liberation of the camp: PLN 10.00 for individuals and PLN 1.00 per person for organised groups.
- More details concerning the history and culture of the Lublin Jews are available on the Internet at <http://platon.man.lublin.pl> (JEWS)