**Tour „In the footsteps of the Jewish population in Zelechow”**

The Jewish population settled inZelechowin XVI century. Later, it constituted over 60% of inhabitants. They lived in the city center, while the Poles lived on its outskirts. In 1939 Zelechow counted 9500 inhabitants, including 5530 Jews.

 **FAMOUS JEWS FROM ZELECHOW**

There are few distinguished figures, related to Jewish Zelechow. They were born here, but they gained education in big Polish cities and abroad.

**IssacWeissenberg** is the most famous to the inhabitants of Zelechow. This Jewish writer and playwright showed life of Polish and Jewish workers in small town in XX century. He lived and died in Warsaw. There’s a street named after his name.

**YechielLerer** was also related to Weissenberg’s literary circle in Warsaw. He died in the Treblinka death camp.

**JackobRotbaum** was a deserved theater director, actor and painter. He directed in many countries such as USA, Canada, Great Britain and France. He was also a theater director in many spectacles in Wroclaw’s theatres. He died in 1994.

**HalinaBirenbaum** is a Polish-Israeli writer and poet. Her mother Perl Grynsztein – Kijewska came from Zelechow. In her childhood, when she lived in Warsaw she visited her grandparents in Zelechow. She survived holocaust. Now she lives in Israel.

**POWER PLANT**

Built in 1927, old power plant was located on the gen. Orlicz – Deszer Street (now Weissenberg Street). It was founded by initiative of the authorities of city Zelechow. It was built by the company from Warsaw, where most of the shares were owned by Jews. Srul Leber led the work at the power plant. Polish and Jewish laborers worked in it. After renovation building of former power plant looks different than before WW2.

 **ANIMAL MARKET**

Trading was the main occupation of local Jews. On the square next to Saint Stanislaus Street (now Avenue of the Polish Army) were sold and bought animals, that’s why this square was called "pig market".Jews dominated in this square, but they didn’t participated only in the trade of pigs.

 **POST-JEWISH HOUSES, HANDICRAFT**

Part of Lelewel Street (formerly Officer Street) was located in the Jewsih quarter. Few old Jewish houses has preserved over here. In Jewish houses on the street side were located craft workshops or shops, while family lived on another side of buildings. Second occupation of local Jews was handicraft. They performed all kinds of handicraft in the town. Most of them were tailors, cap makers, shoemakers and saddlers. Most of the bakeries in the city belonged to Jews.

 **HOUSES OF THE LAST RABBIS**

Before war, 2 rabbis lived in Zelechow. Abraham Goldberg lived on BerkJoselowicz Street (now Linden Street). Before war, his house was even longer, surrounded by big, beautiful garden. Rabbi’s daughters sold this house to the father of current owner.

The second rabbi was IcekDawidPrzysucher, he lived on Zadybska Street (currently Traugutt Street). His house preserved too. This is big, storeyed building next to post office.

**PALACE AND ZADYBSKA STREETS**

Pilsudski Street was called Palace Street before war, because it led to Szuster family’s palace. It was the most beautiful street in Zelechow. On the both sides were walkways with benches, lawns, flowers and nicely trimmed trees. Young people from Zelechow spent their free time here. Most Jewish youth were staying at the Palace Street on Saturday, but on Sunday it was dominated by Polish youth. On the Palace Streetyoung people weregoing out on dates.

A place of rest and relaxation was also Zadybska Street, dominated by Jewish inhabitants. Jews were going for the walks to the forest down the street. In the summer local Jews rented rooms from peasants next to the forest, and richer had their own houses. Currently, Letnisko is the name of southern outskirts of Zelechow, where Jewish families were going on summer vacationsbefore war.

 **KAHAL**

Pudly Street was called previouslyWolowa Street and later Rabbi Majzel Street. Building of the Jewish community administration was located here. In the 1930s, Jewish councilors were elected to the Municipal Council of Zelechow. They were about 1/3 of all councilors.

**MIKVAH**

In the underground part of the building was located ritual Jewish bath. Underground remaining parts of bath survived to the present times. They are located next to Municipal and Communal Culture Center on the Pudlo Street

**SYNAGOGUE**

On the square, next to the crossroads of the Palace Street (today Pilsudski Street) and Father Brzoski Street (now Staszic Street) since the XVIII century was located synagogue. Jews built there total of 3 objects which served as synagogue. The oldest synagogue was built in the first half of XVIII century. It burnt during great fire which reached Zelechow In 1880. Next synagogue was a modest, ground-floor, wooden building. In 1885on the local tailor - MojszeNotese’s initiative, was built new synagogue. The work was financed by local Jews.Moishe Notes has collected money, and supervised the work. New synagogue in Zelechow was classified as one of the most beautiful in Poland.

Unfortunately, this beautiful temple was burnt down by Germans on September 16, 1939. In 1944 eventually demolished. After war, City Park was created in this place. There’s also located a memorial plaque commemorating the synagogue.

 **JEWISH CHILDREN IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Jewish children also attended to public schools. About 1910 a primary school was created in Zelechow. Since 1922 Polish and Jewish children were taught together. On the Palace Street (now Pilsudski Street) next to city authorities building were located No. 1 and No. 2 elementary schools. Both buildings survived to the present day.

 **MARKETPLACE**

Zelechow marketplace was the greatest place to work in the city for local Jews.In the buildings around the market square, the town hall and trade fair booths operated dozens of shops. Zelechow marketplace before the war was lively, especially on Tuesdays when fairs were held. Nearly the whole was inhabited by Jews.

 **JATKOWA STREET**

Before the war, the Jatkowa Street in Zelechow was a center of slaughter and trade in beef.Jews bought cattle, calves and sheep in the entire area.Then they killed them and sold the meat in this place. In 1939 there were 29 primitive Jewish butcher shops. To this day, this street has retained its name.

**SHOE PLANT**

On the Keblowska Street (now Chlopickiego Street) Zelechow council, on the initiative of the mayor LudwikPudlo created in 1927 Shoe Manufacturing Plant for unemployed. Shoes for the army were made here. Production was carried out manually. In the factory126-craftsmen found the work. Half of them were Jewish shoemakers. Polish and Jewish craftsmen worked together in this place. Although rebuilt, factory building still stands today.

 **JEWISH CEMETERY**

Since 1802 Jewish cemetery is located at the crossroads of Reymont Street and Chlopickiego Street. Earlier, the dead Jews were buried in the square around the synagogue.Currently, there are few tombstones. During the occupation the Germans robbed them to reinforce the area around the police station at the Palace Street. Some residents of Zelechow also took gravestones from the Jewish cemetery to reinforce backyards and other places.

Double tombstone is unique in the Zelechow cemetery. This tombstone was erected for two women who died in 1885. In 2014 the cemetery was fenced and thememorial plaque was placed at the entrance. In November 2015 new tombstones were erected on the grave of the Tzadik Ariele Kuznicer and a rabbi Aron ha-Kohen.

 **GHETTO IN ZELECHOW**

During World War II, the Jewish population in Zelechow increased to about 13,000 because Jews from Warsaw and Lodz and the surrounding area came here. In November of 1940 ghetto was established, which included the central part of the city. It was not fenced.

 **HOLOCAUST**

On 30 September 1942 all local Jews were gathered in the square around the synagogue and deprived of valuables. Then this population were driven to the railway station in Sobolew. Elders and children were brought by peasant carts. In the Sobolew, the Jews were loaded into wagons and transported to the Treblinka death camp.