

Bochnia

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var DrawingManagerData = {"mapZoom":12,"mapCenter":["49.968135836","20.4357261437"],"mapObjects":[{"title":"Bochnia","type":"marker","coordinates":["49.9686344259","20.4303273934"]}]}]; var GoogleMaps = { map: null, mapZoom: (DrawingManagerData == "" ? 4 : DrawingManagerData.mapZoom), mapCenter: (DrawingManagerData == "" ? new google.maps.LatLng(24.886436490787712, -70.2685546875) : new google.maps.LatLng(DrawingManagerData.mapCenter[0], DrawingManagerData.mapCenter[1])), existingAreas: (DrawingManagerData == "" ? "" : DrawingManagerData.mapObjects), renderedAreas: [], drawingManager: null, markerIcons: { "regular" : "http://icons.iconarchive.com/icons/icons-land/vista-map-markers/32/Map-Marker-Marker-Outside-Chartreuse-icon.png", "hovered" : "http://icons.iconarchive.com/icons/icons-land/vista-map-markers/64/Map-Marker-Marker-Outside-Azure-icon.png"}, init: function() { //Define Map Center View var mapOptions = { zoom: this.mapZoom, center: this.mapCenter, mapTypeControlOptions: { mapTypeIds: [google.maps.MapTypeId.ROADMAP,google.maps.MapTypeId.TERRAIN, google.maps.MapTypeId.SATELLITE] }, mapTypeId: google.maps.MapTypeId.TERRAIN }; this.map = new google.maps.Map(document.getElementById('map-canvas'), mapOptions); //draw existing areas this.drawExistingAreas(); }, drawExistingAreas: function() { for (var i in this.existingAreas) { //handle polygons if ( this.existingAreas[i].type == "polygon" ) { var paths = []; for (var point in this.existingAreas[i].coordinates) { paths.push(new google.maps.LatLng ( this.existingAreas[i].coordinates[point][0], this.existingAreas[i].coordinates[point][1] ) ); } var area = new google.maps.Polygon({ paths: paths, strokeColor: '#FF0000', strokeOpacity: 0.8, strokeWeight: 2, fillColor: '#FF0000', fillOpacity: 0.35, title: this.existingAreas[i].title, type: this.existingAreas[i].type }); area.setMap(this.map); this.drawLabel(this.existingAreas[i]); } //handle markers if ( this.existingAreas[i].type == "marker" ) { var position = new google.maps.LatLng(this.existingAreas[i].coordinates[0][0], this.existingAreas[i].coordinates[0][1]); var marker = new google.maps.Marker({ position: position, icon: GoogleMaps.markerIcons.regular, title: this.existingAreas[i].title, type: this.existingAreas[i].type }); marker.setMap(this.map); this.drawLabel(this.existingAreas[i]); } } }, drawLabel: function( object ) { var marker = new MarkerWithLabel({ position: new google.maps.LatLng(object.coordinates[0][0], object.coordinates[0][1]), map: this.map, labelContent: object.title, labelAnchor: new google.maps.Point(30, 20), labelClass: "drawing_manager_read_only_label", // the CSS class for the label labelStyle: {opacity: 1}, icon: "http://placeholder.it/1x1", visible: true }); } } jQuery(function() { GoogleMaps.init(); });
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Name in Polish: Bochnia

Name in German: Bokhnya

Name in Ukrainian: Бохня

Name in Russian: Бохня

Name in Hebrew: בוכניה

Administrative History:

Years	Town	District	Province	Country
Till 1772	Bochnia			Polish-Lithuanian Commo

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				nwealth: Kingdom of Poland
1772-1918	Bochnia	Bochnia	Galicia	Austrain-Hun garian Empire
1918-1939	Bochnia	Bochnia	Krakow	Poland
1939-1945	Bochnia	Bochnia		Under Nazi German occupation
Since WWII	Bochnia			Poland

Population Data:

Years	Total popula tion	Jewis h pop ulation	Jewis h ecen tage o f popu lation
1880	6480	927	15%
1900	9550	1911	20%
1921	11027	2459	22.3 %
1939		appro xemt ly 2000	20%

Remarks:

Bochnia is situated on the east bank of the Raba River, a southern tributary of the Vistula, c. 30km east of Krakow and c. 40km west of Tarnów. In the late twelfth or mid-thirteenth century, there were many salt mines in the area. These became the main economic cornerstone of the city. Bolesław V, the Chaste, granted the settlement the privileges of a city and renewed the mining operations that had stopped, apparently because of the Tatar invasion.

Over the course of generations, Polish kings assisted the economic development of the city and invested in the development of infrastructure necessary for the salt industry. In 1393 and 1398, special privileges were granted to miners. It was then that the city began to prosper, but different events slowed and impeded the city's progress. In 1447, a fire broke out and destroyed a large part of the city. (The same happened in 1510 and 1644.) Plague struck in 1453. In 1494, the city was granted the privilege of holding a free market for meat. This was in addition to the continuous population growth enabled by the salt mines. The city also developed a woven fabric industry. During the wars of the sixteenth century, Bochnia was transferred to Austria to secure the military assistance it granted Poland in the war against the Swedes. It remained under Austrian rule until the beginning of the eighteenth century, after the Treaty of Karlowitz. The period under Austrial rule led to a steep decline in the city's conditions.

After the Partition of Poland, the Austrians understood the importance of Bochnia's natural treasures and further developed the mining and export of salt. This, of course, led to growth in all sectors of the economy, trade, and industry. After World War I, the city was visited by several catastrophes: a flood in 1925 and a fire in 1930 that harmed the city, the mines, and the mining equipment. The harsh economic conditions led, in 1937, to uprisings and labor strikes.

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The Jews

Jews arrived in Bochnia, apparently, with the discovery of the salt mines. Many Jews were involved in various facets of the salt industry. During periods when the community was already established, we

know of wealthy Jews who leased the salt mines and marketed the salt throughout Poland. We also know of Jews who were burned at the stake in 1455, for reasons that are not clear. By 1555 there was an organized Jewish community, one of the 61 communities that received from King Sigmund Augustus the right to sell kosher meat as well as privileges exempting them from the jurisdiction of municipal courts; they were subject only to the alderman's courts and the rabbinical courts. Nevertheless, in 1605, following a libel that the Jews "desecrated the host", the Jews were expelled from Bochnia by decision of the municipal council. Most of the exiled Jews moved to nearby Krakow or to Nowy Wiśnicz. Some of these exiles were known by the name "Bochner" even many generations later – for example, Rabbi Hayyim ben Binyamin Ze'ev Bochner of Krakow, the author of Or Hadaash. Jews were permitted to participate in annual fairs, but immediately upon the conclusion of the fair, no Jews remained in the city. They feared the heavy fines that would be imposed on them if they would remain in the city beyond the time permitted. No Jews lived permanently in the city until the mid-nineteenth century. There are only mentions of Jewish craftsmen living temporarily in the city during various periods.

In the late 1850s, the ban on Jewish entry to Bochnia began to be relaxed. At first, merchants were allowed in, and then, in 1862, due to the intervention of the Austrian authorities, Jews were permitted to settle in the city. Thus, Jews began to return to Bochnia gradually. In short order they founded a community with a synagogue, charitable institutions, and a communal leadership. The first rabbi of Bochnia was Rabbi Barukh Menaḥem Mendel ben Nathan of Oswiecim, who was appointed in 1866. The Jewish community soon numbered 1,666 souls, most of whom engaged in trade, with a minority engaged in crafts. Between 1906 and 1908, no rabbi served the city, but thereafter the position was filled by Rabbi Asher Meir Halberstam, a great-grandson of Rabbi Hayim of Sanz (Nowy Sącz), and he was succeeded by his son, Yehoshua, who perished in the Holocaust. Already in 1892, a branch of the Love of Zion Society was founded in the city, a branch of Zion was founded in the early 20th century, a Mizrahi branch was founded in 1911, and the following year a branch of Poalei Zion was founded. Alongside political activities, Zionist youth groups in the spirit of the various movements were also established, as were cultural institutions and schools to teach Hebrew. The vast majority of Jewish children in town attended the Talmud Torah; only a few attended the general public school.

During World War I, the number of Jews in Bochnia remained steady and even increased, but after the war they faced difficult financial circumstances, like other communities throughout Poland. About half of all businesses and factories in the city were under Jewish ownership. Most of them dealt with food, shoemaking, tailoring, tinsmithing, and construction. There were several mutual aid institutions in town, such as: A cooperative bank under the auspices of the Joint Distribution Committee, and a private credit bank that operated from 1926 to 1938. There was an interest-free loan fund for small business owners and merchants. The community board continued operating communal philanthropic societies to care for the sick and bury the dead, a clinic with a full-time doctor who offered services to all who needed them, a society that distributed basic goods and gave financial support to the local poor, and a society to aid orphans. In addition to the deteriorating economic situation, the Polish national awakening, which bore an anti-Semitic character, was gaining momentum by the end of World War I, and in 1918, turmoil broke out in the city's environs, causing an influx of Jewish refugees who had been plundered in the surrounding villages. In the 1930s, there was likewise a considerable number of anti-Semitic incidents. In 1934, rioters attacked a Jewish shopkeeper, severely wounding him. In 1934 and 1936, anti-Semitic placards calling to boycott and hurt the Jews, were distributed. In 1937, there were attempts to organize patrols that would prevent Christians from buying from Jewish businesses, but activists from the workers' parties prevented it, and a delegation of Jews successfully lobbied the authorities to provide police protection. However, in 1939, the patrols succeeded, and no one stood in their way.

World War II

Even before the outbreak of World War II, in August 1939, the Jews of Bochnia began moving eastward out of fear for an attack by Nazi Germany. Once the war began, many more Jews began to abandon the city and move eastward, toward the Soviet border. After the Soviet occupation, many of them were exiled into the interior of the USSR in June 1940.

When the Nazis entered the city three days after the war started, there began abductions of Jews for forced labor, pillaging, abuse, degradation, and various demands for ransom. Right after the German occupation, a Judenrat was established, headed by Simḥa Weiss. Its role was to organize the forced labor and provide property and money at the demand of the Nazi army. Until May 1942, Jews were employed in occasional labor, but professional work details in clothing and shoe factories were also established. Already in 1941, deportations to labor camps in the region began. On March 16, 1942, a

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closed ghetto was established, and the condition of its population began deteriorating due to overcrowding and food shortages. On August 24, 1942, the first aktion took place, lasting three days. Its victims were sent in cattle cars to the Belzec extermination camp, and one group was sent to the Rakowice labor camp. After the aktion, another 1,500 Jews from the region were gathered to the ghetto, worsening the conditions therein. About three months later, on November 2, 1942, the second aktion was carried out, during which all women and children, ill and infirm were sent to the Belzec extermination camp. Patients in the ghetto's Jewish hospital were murdered in their beds, along with some of the medical staff. After the aktion, several hundred more Jews were brought to Bochnia from the neighboring areas. At that time, a group of Jewish youths from Bochnia organized to flee the ghetto for the Slovakian and Hungarian border. However, only a few of them reached their destination. Most were murdered on the way. Some youths in the city maintained close ties with the Jewish Combat Organization in Krakow. On August 15, 1943, the final aktion in the ghetto began. All of its residents were deported to Szebnia and Plaszow. Only 120 Jews remained in Bochnia, to organize and arrange the Jewish property to be sent to Germany. A month later, they, too, were sent to these camps. On October 1, 1943, Bochnia was declared Judenrein. Individual Jews managed to hide with area farmers, but some of them were murdered by the Polish Armia Krajowa, which operated in the area. At the end of the war, from the entire community of Bochnia, only c. 30 survivors remained in Poland, and another 60 who had been exiled to the Soviet Union.

(Roe Goldshmidt)

Sources:

Pinkasei HaKehilot, vol. 3, Bochnia, pp. 64-69.

Meir Wunder, Encyclopedia Le-Hakhmei Galicia, vol. 2, pp. 471-2.

D. Jakubowicz, Sefer zikaron le-kehilot Wadowice, Andrychów, Kalwaria, Myślenice, ve-Sucha, Givatayim – Ramat Gan (1967), pp. 15-30.

[Bochnia in Virtual Shtetel](#)

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[About the Ghetto in Bochnia](#)

[בוכניה באתר המרכז למורשת יהדות פולין](#)

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Coordinates: 49°58' N, 20°26' E

Historical-cultural region: Western Galicia

Items relevant to the community

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Betr. die Ernennung von Bezirks- und Gemeindera...	Картки Центрального архіву історії єврейського народу в Єрусалимі	1846
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Sprawozdania dot. pogromów i ruchu antysemickie...	Картки Центрального архіву історії єврейського народу в Єрусалимі	1899
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Correspondence with the Landesgubernium, distri...	Картки Центрального архіву історії єврейського народу в Єрусалимі	1847
Korespondencja w sprawie zbadania stanu chajder...	Картки Центрального архіву історії єврейського народу в Єрусалимі	1877 до 1908
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