

PIOTRKÓW TRYBUNALSKI

Jews were granted rights to settle in designated areas of Piotrków in the mid-sixteenth century, but were expelled following a blood libel (accusation of ritual murder) in 1590. In 1679, the Polish king Jan Sobieski granted permission for Jews to return, conduct trade, and build a synagogue. After the partitions of the Polish Commonwealth, Piotrków passed first to Prussia and then to the czars. The city profited from the opening of a railway line connecting Warsaw and Vienna, and from the development of industry in central Poland in the mid-nineteenth century. Jews founded textile mills in Piotrków; Jewish workers were employed in the timber and textile industries. In 1861, as part of a series of Russian reforms in central Poland, Jews obtained the right to vote and stand for election to the municipal council.

Piotrków became an important Jewish cultural and religious center, fueled by a thriving Hebrew press and other publishing activities. During the interwar period, most Jewish political parties were represented in Piotrków. There were three weekly Yiddish newspapers, a Jewish musical society and numerous other associations and institutions. Particularly well known was Rabbi Yehuda Meir Shapira, the community's chief rabbi from 1924 to 1931. Shapira was a member of the Polish Parliament from the religious Agudes Israel Party, and the founder and head of Yeshivat Hakhmei Lublin (Yeshiva of the Sages of Lublin), the modern religious seminary in Lublin that was celebrated in Poland and in Jewish communities throughout the world.

The ghetto in Piotrków Trybunalski was established by the Germans on October 8, 1939, making it the first in German-occupied Poland. The ghetto swelled with refugees from surrounding towns, and by October 1942, numbered about 25,000 Jews. At the end of that month, some 22,000 Jews were deported to the Treblinka death camp. The remainder worked at slave labor, but nearly all of them were murdered by 1944. Several hundred Jews managed to escape the ghetto and join partisans in the surrounding forests. A number of Piotrków's sons became prominent figures in Jewish political and religious affairs after the war. Among them were Israel Meir Lau, later the chief rabbi of Israel, and Naphtali Lau-Lavie, later the Israeli ambassador to the United States.

Location

42 km SSE of Łódź

51°24' / 19°41'

Voivodship: Piotrków Trybunalski

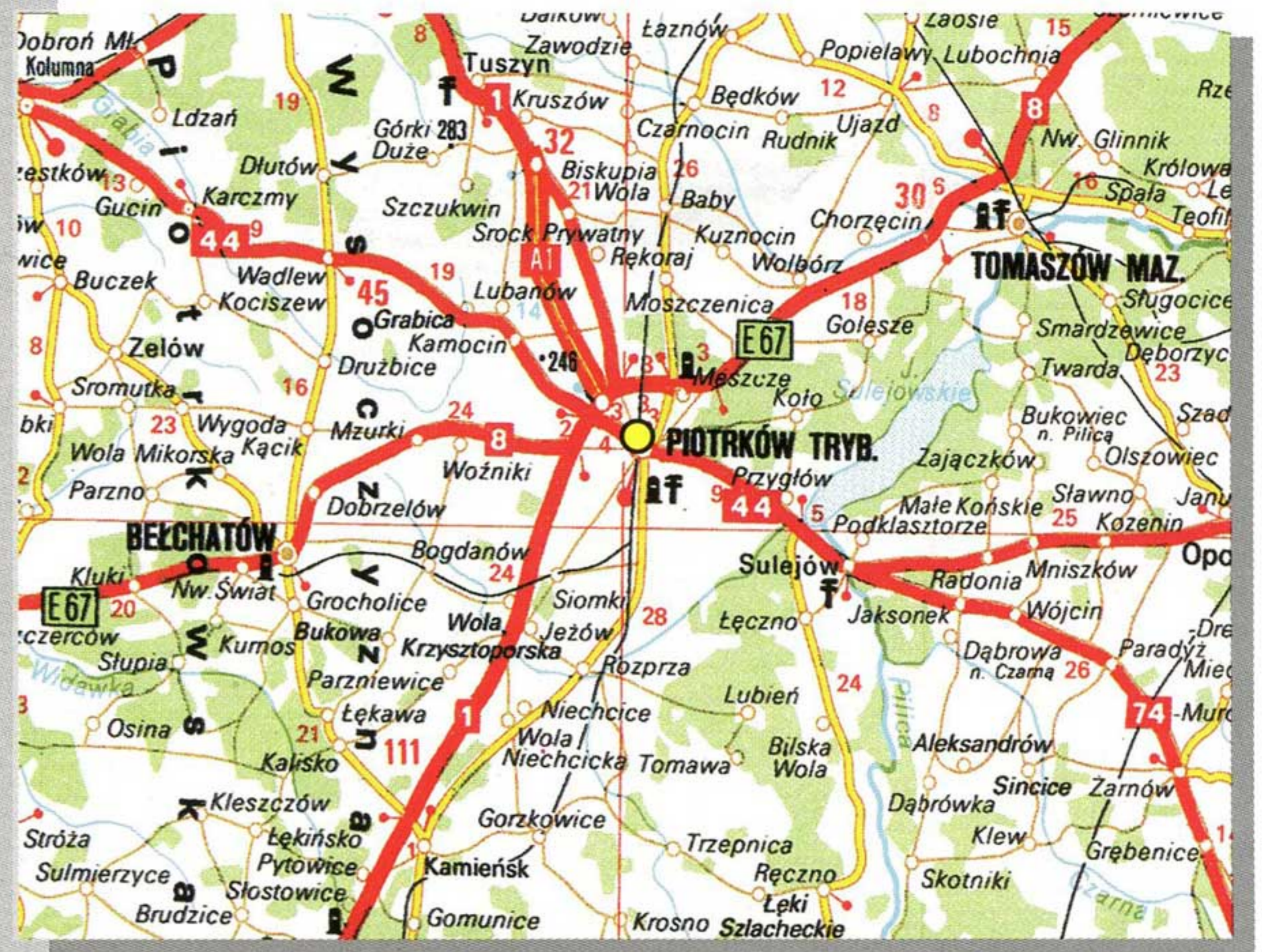
General Population, 1939

54,000 (33% Jewish)

General Population, 1994

81,479

PETRIKAU, PETRIKAU, PETROKOW, PIOTRKOW



SYNAGOGUES

ul. Jerozolimska

Large synagogue dates from the nineteenth century.
Rebuilt in 1964.

Current use: public library.

ul. Jerozolimska (adjacent to Large Synagogue)

Small synagogue built in 1781.

Current use: children's library.

A large Hebrew mural is still visible behind the stacks.

DEPORTATIONS

Buchenwald, Bergen-Belsen, Treblinka, Mauthausen,
Ravensbrück.

HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL

ul. Spacerowa (Jewish cemetery)

A symbolic grave where ghetto inhabitants were
executed (1940–1943).



■ Piotrków Synagogue, ul. Jerozolimska, 1995

1



■ Piotrków cemetery, 1995

2

JEWISH CEMETERIES

ul. Spacerowa 93

Tombstones date from 1795.

Remaining tombstones: 1,000+.



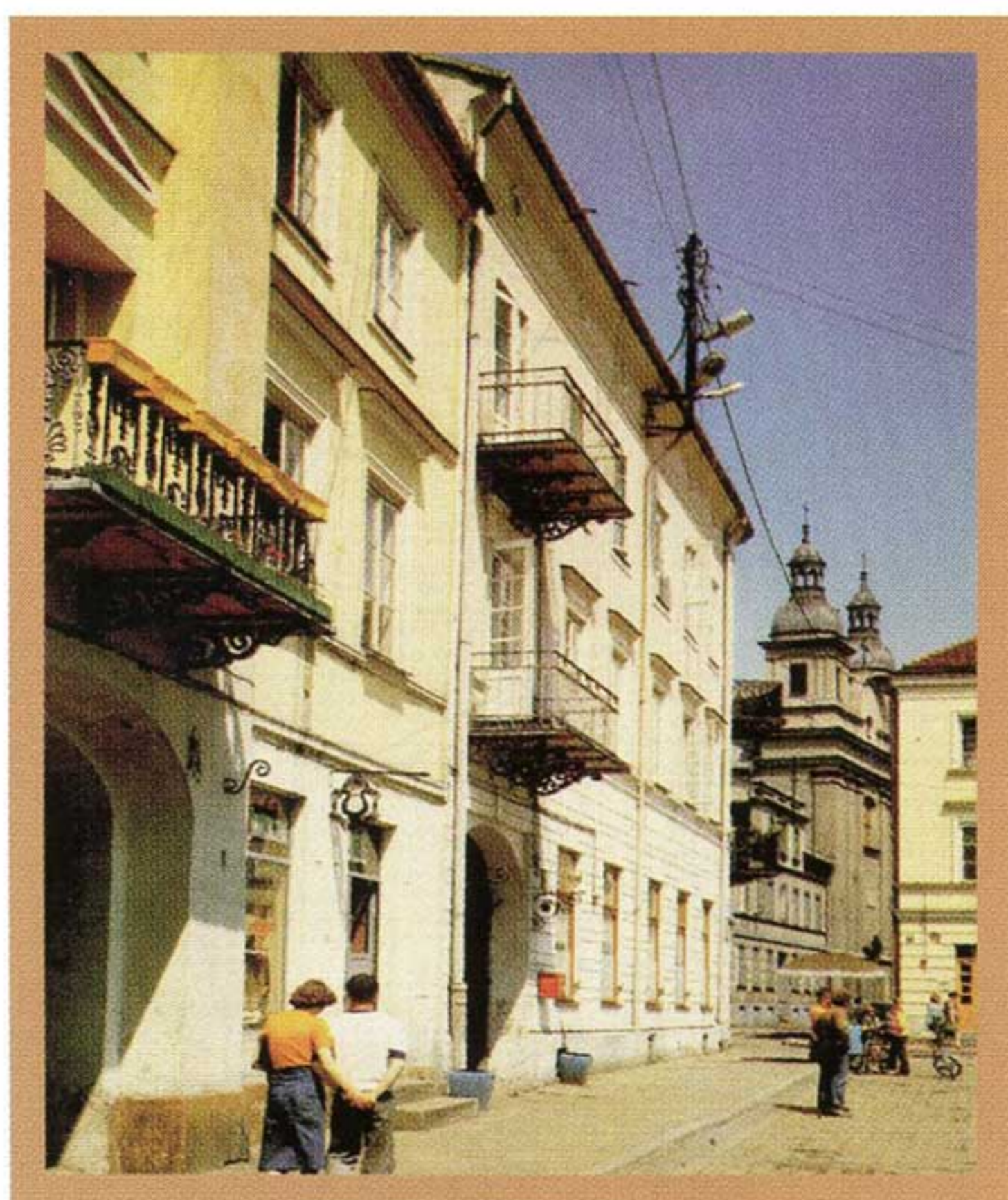
■ Staro-Warszawska and Zamurowa Streets, c. 1917

3

ul. Wojska Polskiego

Cemetery completely destroyed (dating from 1677).

Current use: grassy area directly behind the large synagogue.



■ Segment of Plac Trybunalski, today

4

SELECTED READING

Baranowski, Jerzy, and Henryk Jaworowski. "Historia i rozwój przetrzenny synagogi w Piotrkowie Trybunalskim" (The History and Development of the Synagogue in Piotrków Trybunalski). *BŻIH* 57 (1966): 121–133. (P)

Birnbaum, Jacob. "Piotrków Trybunalski: The Last Chapter." In Roman Mogilanski, *The Ghetto Anthology*. Los Angeles: American Congress of Jews from Poland, 1985.

Eisenbach, A. "Materiały do struktury, działalności gospodarczej ludności żydowskiej w Królestwie Polskim w latach osiemdziesiątych XIX wieku" (Material About the Economic Structure and Activity of the Jewish Population in the Kingdom of Poland in the Eighties of the Nineteenth Century). *BŻIH* 29 (1959): 72–111. (P)

Feinkind, Mojżesz. *Dzieje Żydów w Piotrkowie i okolicy* (History of the Jews in Piotrków and Environs). Piotrków: Nakład własny, 1930. (P)

Fijałek, Jan. "Do zagadnienia szpitalnictwa żydowskiego w Piotrkowie Trybunalskim w połowie XIX w." (Concerning the Jewish Hospitals in Piotrków Trybunalski in the Mid-Nineteenth Century). *BŻIH* 31 (July–Sept. 1959): 38–56. (P)

Giladi, Ben, ed. *A Tale of One City: Piotrków Trybunalski*. New York: Shengold Publishers, 1991.

Lubliner, Michael. "The Purim Massacre in Piotrków." In Roman Mogilanski, *The Ghetto Anthology*. Los Angeles: American Congress of Jews from Poland, 1985.

Melz, Yaakov, and N. (Lavy) Lau, eds. *Piotrkov-Tribunalski veva-sevivah: sefer zikaron* (Piotrków Trybunalski and Vicinity: A Memorial Book). Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Piotrków Trybunalski in Israel, 1965. (H, Y, E)

Sanik, Leibel. *Someday We'll Be Free*. New York: C.I.S. Publishers, 1994.

Socken, Rochele. "Reflection: Piotrków Revisited." *New Bulletin* 13 (Jan.–Feb. 1986): 14–17.

BIBLIOGRAPHIC SOURCES

CAHJP; CTD; EDRD; EJ; EOH; GA; GUM3; GUM4; GUM5; GUM6; GYLA; HSL; JE; JGFF; JHT; KH; LDL; LDS; LVY; PHP1; PJH; RJHS; SF