

WŁOCŁAWEK

Włocławek, located in central Poland, is one of the oldest Polish towns, but it was not until the beginning of the nineteenth century that Jews were permitted to settle there in designated areas. When restrictions on settlement were lifted in 1862, the community rapidly grew in size; by 1909, Jews constituted 21 percent of the town's population. The first synagogue was erected in 1854. In the interwar period, there was a Jewish high school in Włocławek, and two Yiddish weeklies were published there. Zionists, especially followers of the religious Mizrahi movement and right-wing Zionist Revisionists, were particularly influential.

Włocławek was occupied by the Germans on September 14, 1939, renamed Leslau, and, like Łódź, incorporated into the German Reich. All the synagogues were burned down; thousands of Jews were deported to eastern Poland or fled on their own to other cities, especially Warsaw. A ghetto was established in November 1940 for the 3,000 remaining Jews. In October of the following year, some of its inmates were transferred to the Łódź ghetto; the remaining Jews were deported to the Chełmno death camp in April–May 1942, and the ghetto was burned down.

After the war, survivors from Włocławek, along with Jews returning from the Soviet Union, settled in the town and, aided by the American Joint Distribution Committee, began to rebuild a Jewish community. However, the community gradually dwindled. Finally, it dissolved during the so-called anti-Zionist campaign of 1968–1970.

Location

103 km NNW of Łódź
52°39' / 19°03'
Voivodship: Włocławek

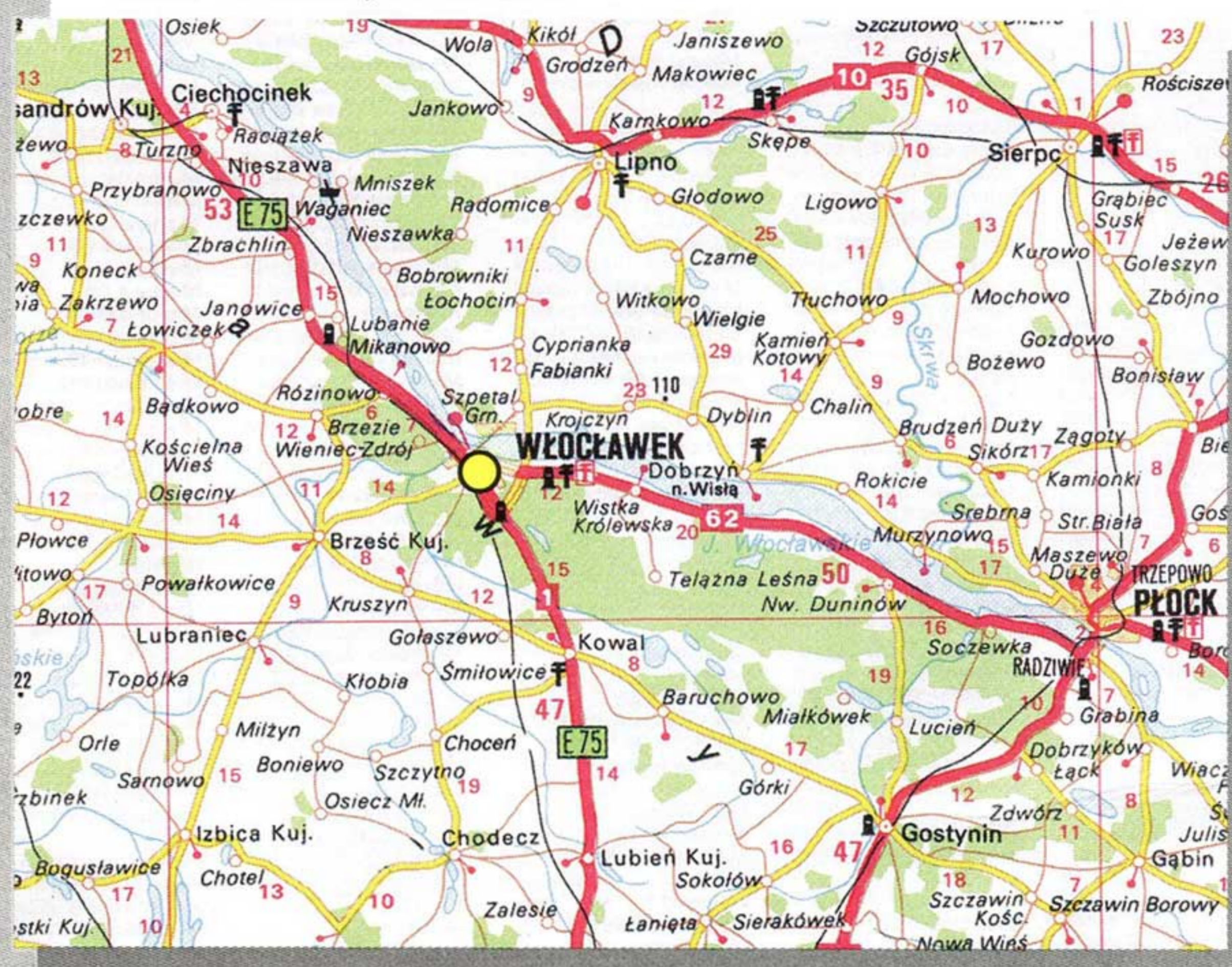
General Population, 1939

59,000 (23% Jewish)

General Population, 1994

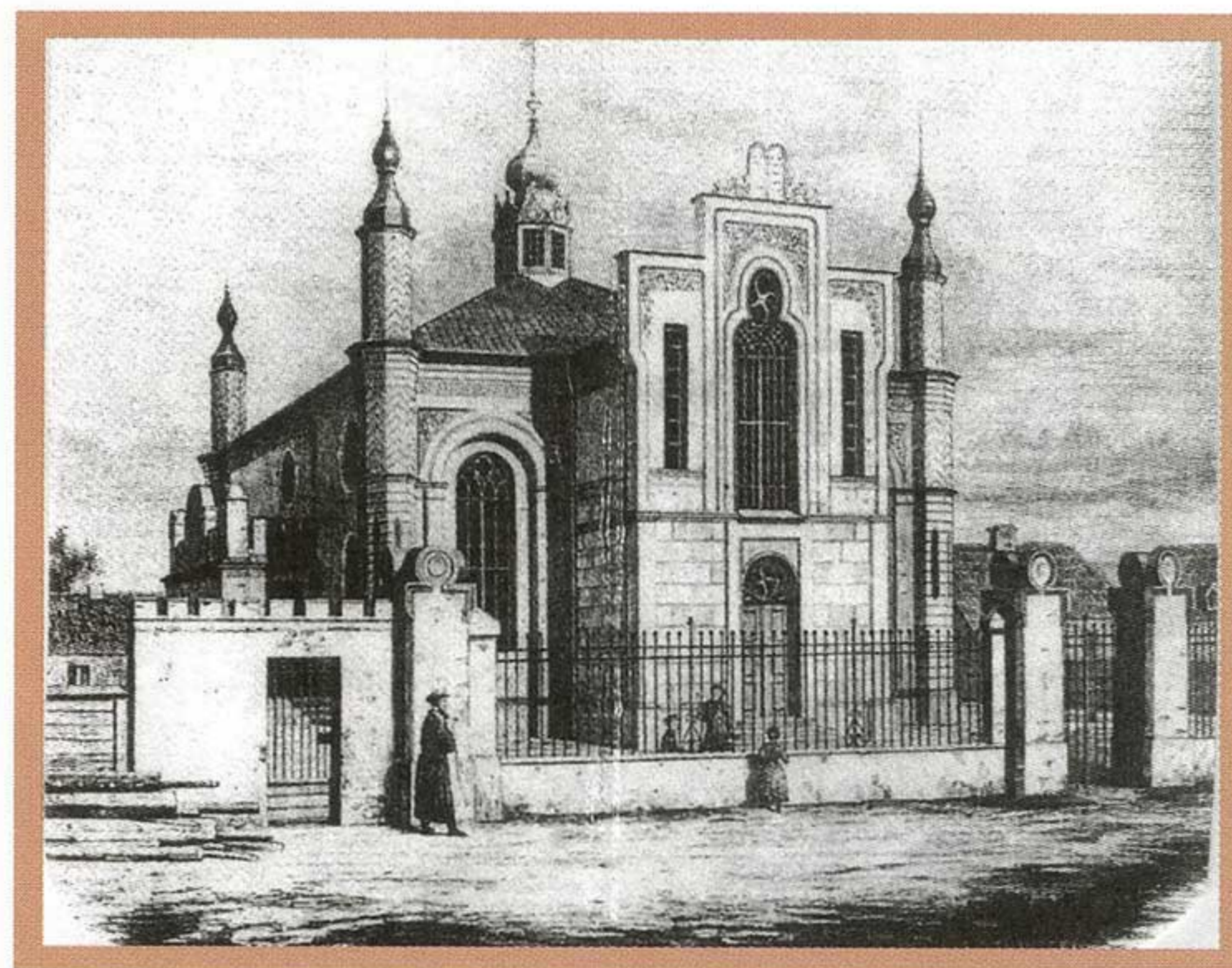
123,135

VLATZLAVEK, VLOTSLAVSK, ALT LESLE, LESLAU



SYNAGOGUES

Among the synagogues destroyed during the Holocaust were the Great Synagogue, constructed in 1854, and a second synagogue dating from 1908.



Great Synagogue, pre-1918

1

JEWISH CEMETERIES

ul. Chopina (Jewish section in communal cemetery)

About two dozen tombstones remain from the nineteenth century, including a few tombstones from the Żałobna cemetery.

ul. Nowomiejska (formerly ul. Żałobna)

Cemetery completely destroyed.

Current site use: vocational school.

SELECTED READING

Miasto Włocławek. Krótki rys jego rozwoju (The City of Włocławek and Its Growth. A Brief Sketch). Warsaw, 1933. (P)

Morawski, Marian. Monografia Włocławka (A Monograph on Włocławek). Włocławek: M. Morawski, 1933. (P)



Holocaust monument, ul. Chopina, 1992

2

HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL

ul. Chopina (communal cemetery)
Monument in Jewish quarter.



Town square today

3

DEPORTATIONS

Łódź ghetto, Chełmno.



View of Vistula River, today

4



ul. Szeroka, c. 1916

5

Thursh, Katriel Fishel, and Meir Korzen, eds. *Vlotslavek veba-sevivah; sefer zikaron* (Włocławek and Vicinity: Memorial Book). Tel Aviv: Association of Former Residents of Włocławek in Israel and the USA, 1967. (H, Y).



Market square, 1915

6

BIBLIOGRAPHIC SOURCES

CTD; EDRD; EJ; GA; GUM3; GUM4; GUM5; GUM6; HSL; JGFF; LDL; LDS; LVY; PHP4; PJH; RJHS; SF