CIECHOCINEK: Kuyavian-Pomeranian

Alternate names: Ciechocinek [Pol], Tsekhotsinek [Rus], Chechochinek [Yid], Hermannsbad [Ger, 1939-45], Russian: Цехоцинек. 52°52' N, 18°48' E, 18 miles NNW of Włocławek, 14 miles SE of Toruń. Yizkor: Wloclawek ve-ha seviva; sefer zikaron, (Tel Aviv, Israel, 1967). A spa town in Kuyavian-Pomeranian Voivodeship, Poland on the Vistula River, nearby settlements include Aleksandrów Kujawski, Odolion, Nowy Ciechocinek and the city of Toruń. During WWII, the town functioned as a big military hospital and health resort for German citizens (known to Germans as Hermannsbad).

Experts considered the local saline springs to be of extreme value and named the thermal spring no. 14 "a wonder of nature". The therapeutics qualities of Ciechocinek springs are directed toward curing cardiovascular, respiratory, orthopedic, traumatic, rheumatic, nervous system and women's diseases. [April 2009]

Jewish settlement began at the end of the 19th century. The first Jewish family came to [from?] the village of Raciążek and Służewo. In the 1870s, Jews played a minimal role in the community since of about 1300 inhabitants Ciechocinek, thirty were Jew when Aleksandrowie Kujawskim had forty, and Raciążku, eighteen. A health spa became available increasing Jewish population to 280 in 1909 (14.3%). According to statistics, in 1869 to 1047 with 243 patients, and in 1872 to 1932 with 216 Jewish patients. A prayer house and school existed in 1880. The request for free land to construct a synagogue and hospital was denied on the basis that the patients did not live permanently in Ciechocinek to make a sufficient number of Jewish families to obtain permission; eighty were necessary. In 1916, Jews from Ciechocinek founded its own cemetery; and in 1918 became a legal Jewish community of Ciechocinek-Służewo. The majority of Jews lived in restricted streets (currently ul. Broniewskiego), Przejazd, and Zdrojowa. With no synagogue and only houses of prayer, the beit Midrash was formed in 1915 in the home of Kornbluma Wolf "Zdrojowa", which also functioned for the Chasidic community. The synagogue was in the Służewie. The synagogue called "beit Knesset" was bside the "Talmud Torah" school, the mikvah and the Chevra Kadisha.

Jewish settlement played a significant role in developing Ciechocinek at the turn of the twentieth century, especially in the development of trade, of which Jews owned 50%, that led to Polish anti-Semitism and boycott of Jewish business. The local newspaper fanned the flames. At the outbreak of WWII, some Jews fled the city. Persecution of the remaining Jewish population began with severe financial restrictions imposed. In October 1939, the Germans expelled a dozen Jewish families immediately. Following them, approximately 80% of the Jews went to Kutno, Warsaw, Łosice, Gostynin, and Siedlice, leaving a local Jewish population of largely poor and elderly. In 1940, approximately
120 Jews were confined in the home of Lejb Wozka. Some were sent to the forced labor camp in Inowroclawi in 1941 and on April 19, 1942 to the extermination camp at Chelmno nad Nerem. [April 2009]

CEMETERY: Established in 1916 on the outskirts of the city on ul. Wołuszewskiej near the Roman Catholic cemetery, a wooden fence surrounded a preburial house and caretaker dwelling. No tombstones remain in the cemetery now a parking lot and possibly part used as a Catholic cemetery. Only the preburial house remains, currently a residence. [April 2009]