

# Uzhgorod

memorial places of  
Jewish history

**Written by Sabina Viron**

**(Uzhgorod, Ukraine).**

*The translation of this book is tribute to all  
Jews – adults and children, blessed to be  
their memory, of Subcarpathian region, who  
lost their life in Holocaust.*

*Translated from Russian by Tibor Weitzen*

*(Sydney, Australia).*

# Uzhgorod memorial places of Jewish history



## A SHORT HISTORY OF UZHGOROD

The best known of the first city founders are the Slavs. One of their tribes — White Croats — settled the area of the modern Uzhgorod in the second half of the first Millennium AD. During the 9th century a fortified castle changed into a fortified early feudal town-settlement, which became the centre of a new Slavonic principality, at the head of which was a legendary prince Laborets.

In 903 AD Hungarian tribes, headed by their leader Almosh, stormed the Hungvar fortress. The forces were not equal and Laborets was defeated.

After the arrival of the Hungarians, the small town began to extend its borders. In 1241-1242 AD the Tatars of Baty-khan burnt out the settlement. From 1318 and for 360 years long the Druhetts (Italian Counts) had owned the town. During that period Philip Druhett builds a new stone fortress on the place of the modern castle. Together with the castle the city began to grow. Already in 1430 Uzhgorod acquired some privileges from the King and is officially written “The Privileged City of Uzhgorod”

During the 16-17th centuries there are existed many handicraft corporations in Uzhgorod. In that period the city was engaged in the religious fight between Reformative Transylvania and Catholic Austria. In 1646 in the Uzhgorod castle by the aegis of Vatican the Uzhgorod Union was proclaimed and the Greek-Catholic church was established in Subcarpathia. In 1707 Uzhgorod was the residence of Ferenc II Rakoci, the leader of the national-liberation war of the Hungar-

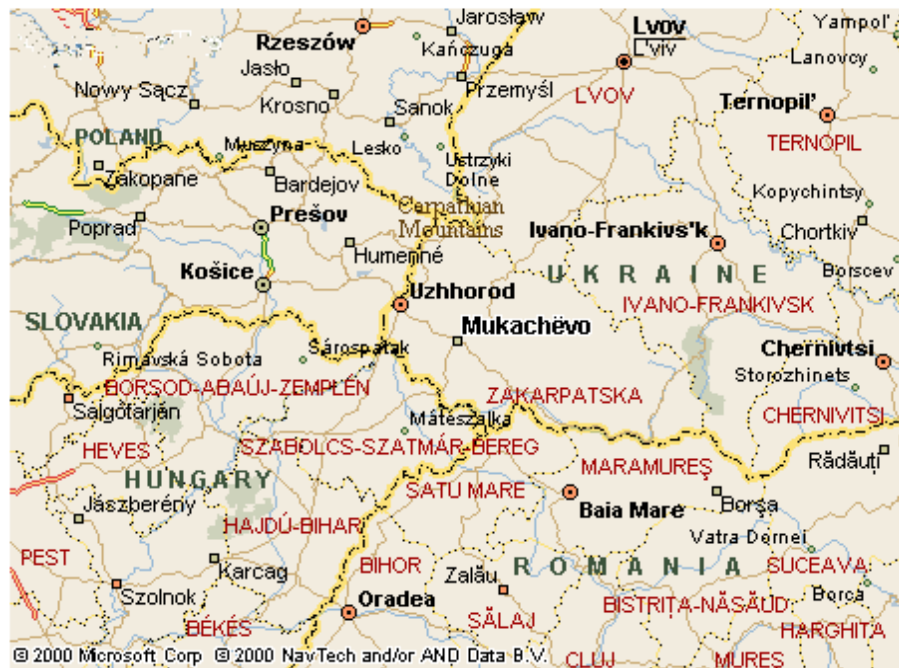
ian people.

The beginning of the 19th century is characterized by the economic scope. There appeared the first factories in Uzhgorod. The greatest influence on Uzhgorod among the political events of the 19th century was made by the Hungarian revolution (1848-1849). March 27, 1848 was officially celebrated in the city as the overthrow of the monarchy in Hungary. In 1872 the first railway "Uzhgorod – Chop" began to work.

The First World War has slowed down the tempo of the city development. In September 10, 1919 Subcarpathia was officially included into the structure of Czechoslovak Republic. Uzhgorod became the administrative centre of the territory. Exactly in those times the city received the modern architectural perfection.

But after the Viennese arbitration in 1938 Uzhgorod was transferred to Hungary. Till the end of 1944 the fights of the Second World War came close to Uzhgorod. On October 27, 1944 the city was liberated by the troops of the Fourth Ukrainian Front.

The liberation period brought the significant changes. At the outskirts of Uzhgorod new enterprises are constructed and the old enterprises are renewed. In 1945 Uzhgorod as the capital of Subcarpathian Ukraine became a member of the USSR. That year the Uzhgorod State University was also opened. Since 1946 Uzhgorod was the centre of newly formed Zakarpatska oblast. Since 1991 Uzhgorod has become the regional centre of Ukraine the most western and the smallest one by population.



The map of the Centre of Europe.

**UZHGOROD**, the forefather of Carpatho-Russian towns, famed in legends, is extent on both banks of river Uzh. More than ten centuries of history passed over this ancient town. But what are the legends, and what is the truth?

Uzhgorod always was a kind of Carpathian Babylon... Many of different peoples were dwelling in this town. And since long ago here were Jews too.

By statistics reports of 1994, in Uzhgorod with total population of about 120,000 residents, there were only 2200 Jews. But not for all times it was so.

The kings, princes, dukes, dynasties and religions are replacing one by other and all of them were passing away into history.

"Cuius regio, eius religio" (lat. – "whose is authority, to his order the religion".)

Chronicles and history books are informing: the first Jewish family in Uzhgorod was registered in 1575, the first Jewish community – in 1724, and the



**The coat of arms of Uzhgorod – shield and vine, war and peace.**

first Synagogue was opened in 1767.

Peter Sova, the historian of Subcarpathia, wrote:

"Properties were rented by Jews and they paid to noble landlords for dwelling and for tavern, where Jews served beer, wine, vodka and food yearly 600 gold coins."

Since long ago the Jewish life here was seething.

Ethnographer Peter Kubijevich wrote in paper "Carpathian Ukraine": "The Jews are the largest minority of Carpathian Ukraine" In towns they are a quarter of the population, in villages – 11%. At 1933 in 100 citizens of Uzhgorod were more than 23 Jews.

In each period of history conditions of the Jewish life were depend which consideration of rulers were on top priority: materialistic or ideological. At former – rulers safeguarded the Jews, in latter – Jews were persecuted.

Decree No.27 at 1867 granted all citizens of Austro-Hungarian Empire, including Jews, with full civic and political rights, therefore this removed obstacles on the road of adaptation of Jews in public life. This was to big advantage for Jews of Uzhgorod (Carpatho-Russian region was in that time the part of Empire) too, where they hold the leading positions in economic life of the town.

"The Jew was indispensable and no one was equal to him" – wrote Ivan Olbracht, the Czech writer, in 1931 – "He [Jew] was only the manager, only the financier. On the backdrop of total illiteracy he was the only man, who owned the information, at least of economical character. He was needed."

So where we start our tour around Uzhgorod from? That's it, from city centre, from romantic Korzo Street, where have been located a lot of Jewish shops and stands, signifying a blooming of little Jewish burgeon.

Or maybe to start from Independence Quay (Naberezhnaja Nezavisimosti), where was standing the Chasidic Synagogue?

The Chasidic movement was born in Ukraine. The founder, Rabbi Israel ben Eliezer Baal Shem Tov (known as Besht), 1700-1760, put the simple and sincere "faith of the hearth" before Rabbinic scholarly. Part of his life Besht spent in Carpathian Mountains, supporting himself and his wife with hard physical work of digging and selling the clay for builders. There is a legend, telling that Besht meet Oleksa Dovbush – the Carpathian Robin Hood. Unprivileged, persecutions and stories of

healing by faith – all this created un-precedent magnificence to Besht. The number of his followers was growing.

All the knowledge worth nothing and all prayers are useless, if their essence do not penetrate the depth of the soul – says the Chasidic traditional teaching.

The Chasidic community of Uzhgorod built their Synagogue and a Mikveh (ritual baths) at 1908 on Rozhkovitch Quay (today it is the Independence Quay).

The Chasidic Synagogue, by the way, was a first reinforced concrete building in the town.

Shabos... Chasids are wearing their traditional garments for this special day: black top hats, some have "straimel" – hat ornamented with fur, long black coat – "lapersdak". In Shabos one can not make out the Rabbi from attendant in Mikveh. In this day everyone must to think about G-d, Who will bring Redemption.

"I am L-rd, your G-d, ordering you: Jews ... build to yourself baths with pool for 40 buckets of water. Who want to be liked by Myself – bath everyday, but lazy... shall bathe on Friday, once per week, before Sabbath. And women shall bathe in the Mikveh once per month..."

*From story "Event in Mikveh" by Ivan Olbracht, 1937.*

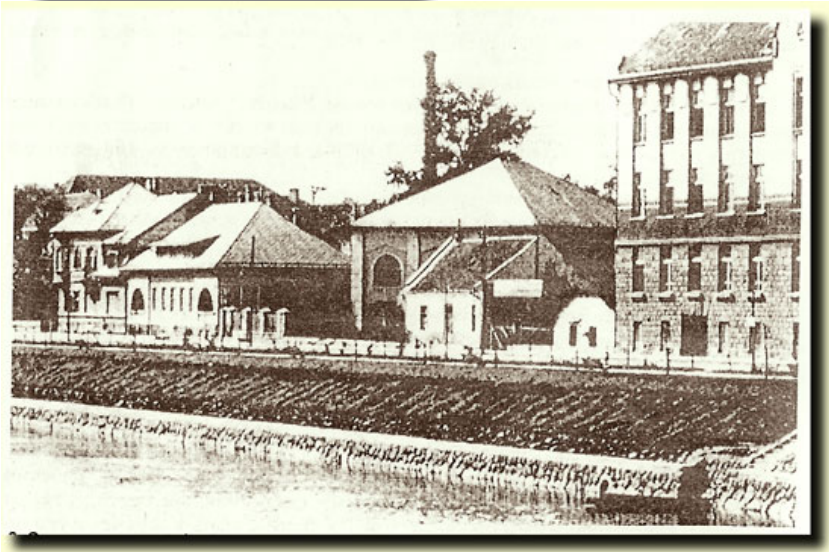
Before Sabbath, Friday afternoon the male part of the Jewish congregation went to Mikveh to immerse into its water: a carpenter, a tailor, a shoemaker, an ironsmith, and a rich merchant – in Mikveh all equal.

At the side of the right bank of the river Uzh we arrive to Eugene Fence Square, where standing a remarkable Synagogue in Mauritanian style with gorgeous portal and columns. It was erected at 1904 (in year 2004 it was 100 years



Rabbi Israel ben Eliezer Baal Shem Tov (known as Besht), 1700-1760.

Korzo Street—the town centre—in years before World War II.



Chasidic Synagogue with Mikveh and with home of Shochet.



The Mikveh, in court of the Chasidic Synagogue, pictured in year 2000.



Chassids leaving the Shul after prayer.



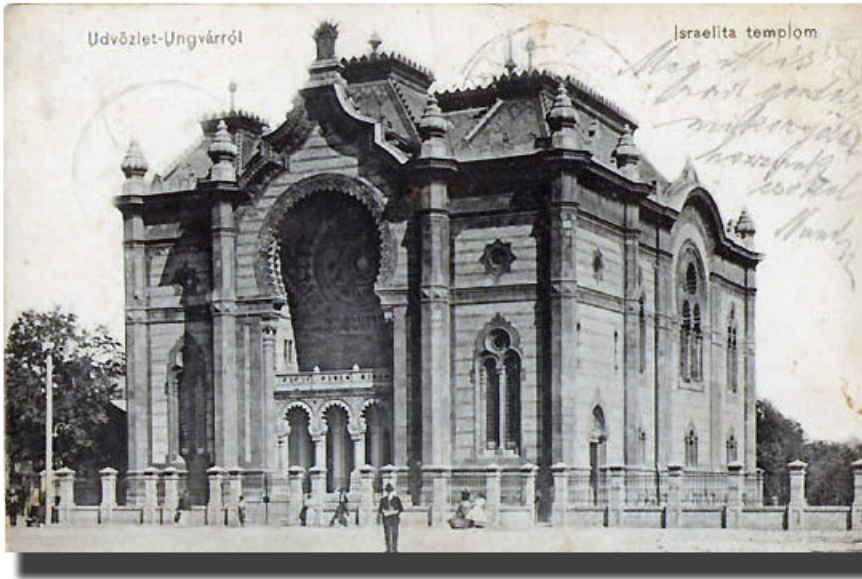
The Chabad House in Uzhgorod. Year 2001



Rabbinate of Uzhgorod before WWII.



Orthodox Synagogue when built in 1904 with Rabbinate building visible on the left side.



Orthodox Synagogue on postcard.



Orthodox Synagogue on Eugene Fencik Square before WWII.



Soviets transformed this magnificent building into Philharmonic Hall in late 50's of the XX century. Perhaps since then no craftsman touched the façade of one of finest Synagogues of Europe.



Now this is a Bank

old— *Translator*) and symbolizing Jews of Uzhgorod. This is one of the most beautiful Synagogues in Europe. Opposite of the Synagogue is the building of former offices of Rabbinate. In beginning of the XX-th century, when this Synagogue was built, the Mauritanian style in architecture was very fashionable in Europe. So this fashion has influenced the architectural design not only of the Synagogue but the Jewish Cultural Centre, Mikveh and some less important buildings. The architects of the synagogue were Gyula Papp and Ferencz Szabolcs.

**L**ets walk to Zhupanskaja Ploshadj (Square), where located the well preserved huge Synagogue, built by the “Neolog” Jewish Community. (Nowadays Neolog is called Progressive or Reform Judaism).

“In regard of worship, Jews of Subcarpathian Russ belong mostly to conservative (orthodox) movement, and so-called “Neolog” (new direction) Judaism was followed by few only, and mostly in large cities. Jewish community of “Neolog” Judaism along with orthodox exist in Uzhgorod only” – wrote Dr. Henry Brody in 1924.

**T**he Reform movement in Judaism sprang up in Europe at end of XVIII century. This name become common to describe the new movement, which supported dynamic development in Judaism and it was an attempt to adaptation in order to receive equal rights with members of other confessions and access to secular education. Information about “Neolog” Community in Uzhgorod begins at the end of XIX century.

In 1870 the Neologs built a huge Synagogue on former Zhatkovich Quay (today it is Zhupanskaja Ploshadj). Until today this building perfectly preserved. Strict forms, almost without decorative details on the facades presenting the classical style of architecture, which was widespread in Europe when

this building was designed and built.

At the present time in Uzhgorod there are three Jewish Communities: Chabad, Progressive & Conservative Judaism.

Finding the solutions of the problems created by contemporary society on the principles of Justice and Legality – are a basic postulate of Reform (Progressive) movement, were declared on Conference of Reform Rabbis in Pittsburgh at 1885.

Continuous development of the Jewish traditions, Jewish education, spirit of pluralism, and social justice, full equality of men and women, respect to fellow people – Jews and non-Jews – these are principles declared by contemporary ideology of Reform Judaism.

The old commercial centre of the town on both banks of river Uzh with their small shops, stalls, restaurants and banks mostly were occupied by Jews. On many shop signboards and ads one could see a lot of the Jewish names: Kalkstein, Freud, Stark etc...

**C**ultural life in the town flourished, including the Jewish part. There existed a Jewish national cultural society; the Jewish theatrical society “Habima” staged not less than 40 plays in Yiddish language.

**T**he Jewish tradition always paid immense attention for education of children and youth.

In book of Psalms there is a saying “Let’s give to your young education to their level, so growing older he never shall turn away”.

*Train a lad according to his manner; even when he grows old he will not deviate from it.*

(Proverbs 22:6)

*If your sons keep my covenant and this testimony of mine that I shall*

*teach them, then your sons will forever sit on your throne.*

(Psalm 132:12)

**T**he first school for boys was established by Jews of Uzhgorod in, by some records, 1789 or by other – in 1792. The oldest survived record about the first teacher dated by 1835. In this year the Jewish community of Uzhgorod had established registry of community staff, including teachers. There recorded that “highly educated and perfectly trained” Leib was appointed earlier as a teacher. His salary was 70 Forints from community and 200 Forints by Jewish Council, also he [Leib] got a right for community provided housing. Leib got here from Moravia and respectfully was called “Professor”. He was teaching Hebrew and German writing and reading. This first known Jewish teacher in Uzhgorod was much respected person. He died in 1848.

The Jewish school, teaching three grades, was opened in 1858. The records keep the names of founders and first teachers: Weinberger, Cseter [Cheter], Ganzfried, Reisman, Gotlieb, Chaim Kron. The school was good equipped. Teaching was in German and in Hungarian as well. Fees were paid by parents and, partially, by community. Later the students are learnt Hebrew.

The religious education was provided by Jewish schools – Cheders.

In 1878 in Uzhgorod were registered 702 Jewish children of school age. 201 of them were learning in Jewish schools, 256 – in schools of Jewish community and 242 boys attended Cheders only. Girls were educated mostly at home. It is known, that in 60s of the XIX century there was a private school for girls, managed by wife of teacher named Leisner.

In school year 1911/1912 in orthodox primary school of



“Neolog” Synagogue on former Zhatkovich Quay on banks of “Little Uzh” river. Year 1915.



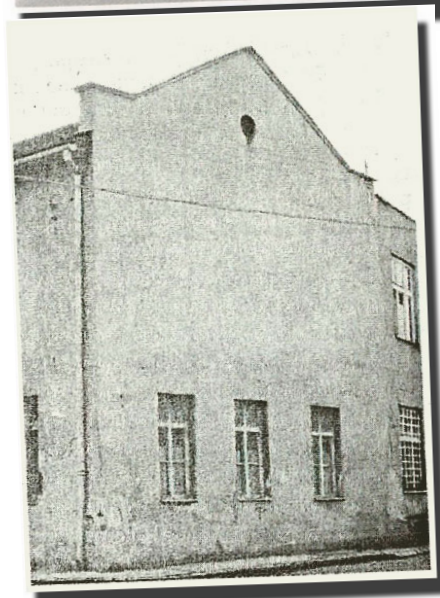
Entrance to “Neolog” Temple from Zhupanska Square.



The house of late Rabbi Falberman on Mukacsevskaja Street, the only Synagogue of Uzhgorod huddles on its backyard.



The Holy Arc at Eastern Wall of the only Synagogue of Uzhgorod.



The building of Radvanka Synagogue. Year 2001.



The Jewish Gymnasium, 2000.



Uzhgorod was enlisted 325 children (195 boys and 130 girls).

Education of girls was mostly in private school. Wealthy families sent their daughters for study in Pest, Kosice, and Preshov. The first ladies school in Uzhgorod was open by Roman-Catholic church in 1859 – so called “Gizela Haus” (today it is a music college). Teachers were Catholic nuns, but Jewish girls were welcomed.

First Jewish ladies school was opened at September 6th, 1905 and contain 1st and 2nd grades with total number of 44 students.

The founder of the first Jewish Ladies school was Deborah Szekely, who was born in Uzhgorod and died at 1911.

As it said in Pirkey Avot (5:21): “He used to say: At the age of five, (one is ripe) for Bible; at ten, for Mishnah, at thirteen, for mitzvoth; at fifteen, for Talmud; at eighteen for the marriage canopy; at twenty, for pursuit; at thirty, for vigour; at forty, for understanding; at fifty, for counsel; at sixty, to be an elder; at seventy, for grey hair; at eighty, for strength; at ninety, to bend over; at one hundred, as if he had died and passed away and disappeared from the world...”.

At the end of 20s – beginning of 30s of XX century on Voloshin Street was erected three-storey building of the Jewish Cultural Centre with school (nowadays this building accommodates one of the faculties of Uzhgorod National University). Later there was built an addition for Jewish bakery which supplied all Jews of the Carpathian region with matzos (now here is a student's mess-hall).

In 1934 started the first enrolment for Jewish Gymnasium. At 1936 there were two classes.

Not far from Gymnasium, where today is the (Russian) Orthodox Church Quay, in 1933 was built by American Joint (AJJDC) a “Jewish Kitchen”. The town's

seniors used to told, that in Kitchen the food was very good but special prizes were given for famous very tasty Cholnt (traditional Shabbat stew) and a lot of local students, knowing about this delicacy, come here to eat, since nobody checked your I.D.

At May 8th, 1919, the Central People's Council in Uzhgorod voted for decree in favour of joining the Subcarpathian region with Czechoslovak Republic.

At February 1920 Uzhgorod becoming the capital city of the region, which was named “Podcarpathskaja Russ” and was the part of Czechoslovak Republic.

What Jews gained from these changes?

Significant activities reflected in community and political life, improving the educational system, began to grow the number of Jewish intelligentsia.

Professor Dr. V.Sook wrote in 1936:

“In Podcarpathskaja Russ we see, that them [Jews] are busy not only in merchant and distribution of goods..., but also doing the most important – all crafts, which required for activities of other citizens..., [they] become an engine of the communal production”.

One must to remember the active involvement of the Jewish Committee (AJJDC) in Podcarpathskaja Russ – with providing credits for cooperatives and repair of factories. The Committee also studied the state of economical affairs of Jews in this region and thus provided statistics about their activities.

Extracts “From Report about teaching”

“In primary schools of Podcarpathskaja Russ are working 814 government teachers, 41 of whom are Czech language teachers, 638 – Russian, 114 – Hungarian, 11 – German, 10 – Rumanian...”

“In no-government schools are

167 teachers:

9 – in Czechoslovak schools,  
66 – in Russian,  
89 – in Hungarian and  
3 – in German...

“In private schools are working 17 teachers only:

4 - in Hungarian and  
13 – in Jewish...

Number of Primary schools with Russian language teaching

	– 501
Czech	- 35
Hungarian	- 122
German	- 14
Jewish	- 8

*Statistical Yearbook of Czechoslovak republic, 1926”*

It must be noted, that Jewish children attended not Jewish schools only but other schools as well.



Most majority of the Jewish population of Uzhgorod were occupied in little trades: repair and making footwear, tailors, blacksmiths, carpenters, and jewellers. There were hatters, bakers and cabbies.

25 – 30% of the Jewish population were engaged in major and minor commerce.

At beginning of 30s, the Czech Jewish footwear tycoon Bata had built next to Hotel “Corona” in centre of Uzhgorod the building, which was known as “Bata Passage”. Developing of mass production of the footwear, which was prompted by Bata, destroyed a lot of minor shoemakers and actually ruined them. Now Bata manufactured the footwear.

Few Jews were employed in government offices, in court houses, a bit more were working in health organisations, schools, banks, cultural institutions.

There were wealthy people too – owners of the brick factories, large stores, rental housing, bakeries, different medium and small factories and workshops.

Some factories are even today manufacturing the same goods



Postcard made at first half of XX century. It is present-day School No.4 at Zhupanskaya Square.



At left—the former “Gizela Haus”, today it is a music college at Voloshin Street.



Postcard of School No.1.




School No. 3 at 30's of XX century.

The formerly Jewish Cultural Centre with school.  
At present it is home of Faculty of History of Uzhgorod University, 2001.



and products as it was by old owners. Brothers Michael and Izidor Weiser were owners of the flourmills on Mukacsevskaja Street, were today still the industrial complex of the bread backing and flour products.


 Lets continue our journey. Here is an old footbridge above river Uzh.

Lets cross the bridge feasting our eyes on leafy panorama of the town and streaming river.

Crossing the bridge we follow up to Mukacsevskaja Street to only functioning orthodox Synagogue in Uzhgorod.

Today no property, except the Synagogue at Mukacsevskaja Street, belongs to Jewish community of Uzhgorod.

The modest house of late Rabbi Falberman since the end of the WWII is in private ownership and the old little Synagogue huddles on its backyard.

 Most one hundred years standing this Synagogue, absorbing history of Jews in this town. Located on the street, which once was inhabited mostly by Jews, she is today the only Synagogue in Uzhgorod and of the whole district up to city of Mukacsevo (Munkacs). Unfortunately, nobody knows the fate of late Rabbi Falberman, who once was the owner of this Synagogue.

It is early morning... Aged men assemble for prayer. But in recent years, as the sign of modern times, more and more young people attending the Synagogue, even young children.

The Holy Ark – contain the Torah scrolls, decorated with wooden adornment – Aron Ha-Kodesh...

Here, inside in this holy place - there are blessed vivid moments of association of the Jew with G-d and there outside, on the street - humdrum of everyday existence...

The mood in Synagogue recalls the pastime and calls to direct one's gaze into the future.


At the present time the part of congregation of this Synagogue belongs to movement of Chabad Lubavitch. The founder of Lubavitch movement – Alte Rebbe, Rabbi Shneur Zalman from Liad (1745-1813) <http://zalman.org/tanya/baalhatanya.htm> – is a creator of moral and ethic philosophical code "Tanya". Chabad is an acronym formed of the initials of Chochmah, Binah, Daat - wisdom, insight, and knowledge. Its ideology seeks to create a synthesis between Chassidism and Torah scholarship, and to establish a fusion of the mystical and the revealed aspects of the Torah.

The basic saying in Lubavitcher Chassidut ethics, as said by Rebbe Shneur Zalman: "Each person can and shall... make good and to refrain from evil in his mind, speech and action. But in reality to have an aversion for evil – in that the person not so imperious over himself, but shall accustom himself to it".

We may to think about ourself as being a perfect and talented people, but there is coming a moment of truth, when we ask ourself what the meaning of our life. How to formulate the idea "what for" – "for sake of what we are in this world?"

Present-day leader and teacher of Chabad is Menachem-Mendel Schneerson from Nikolajev (1902 – 12.06.1994), who formulate the universal idea of appeal to all people in the World to lead virtuous and productive life.


### **Before WWII in Uzhgorod were four Synagogues and five prayer homes (Stibels).**

 During XVII-XVIII centuries Jewish population of Uzhgorod grow slowly. If the written record of first Jewish family here was dated at 1575, in 1769 there were recorded only 93 Jews. In 1891 were counted 3735 Jews when total population of the town 11793 souls; at 1910 – 535 Jews on 16919 inhabitants;

census of 1920 showed only 3743 Jews. The dynamic of these numbers is showing, that WWI affected population of Uzhgorod including Jews. Census of year 1930 counted 7534 Jews at total population of 26675 souls. At the beginning of 40s total population of the town is more than 30 thousand, the number of Jewish inhabitants was approximately 27%, i.e. approx. 8000.

About role of the Jews in political life wrote Dr. G. Brody at 1924: "Their political influence is very significant. it's because they are more intelligent than their surrounding, they are familiar with political situation even from newspapers... without exaggerate we can state that one who pulled the attention of Jews on himself – he is pulling the attention of the whole population"

The fourth synagogue preserved in Uzhgorod is on Ukrainskaja Ulitca [Street], which was attended by Jews of neighbourhoods of Radvanka and Bolotyn.

 adhering to chronology, we continue our tour along ancient Schwabskaya Ulitca [Street] and turn onto Minajskaja Ulitca toward the brick factory, which belonged to Moschkowitch brothers. And where in Spring of 1944 was created the ghetto. From this very place our Jews were taken to Nazi death camps.

To arrange deportation of Jews of Uzhgorod there were setup two ghettos. The first one at the brick factory of Moschkowitch brothers (at Minajskaja Street) and the second one - at a timber warehouse of Mr. Gluck (near to Railway [Stacionnaja] Street).

From these ghettos to certain death were sent some 14000 Jews. These were not Jews of Uzhgorod only, but from many districts of Subcarpathia.

Here was the last shelter for thousands Jews... Here started the last route to the death...



View on Hotel Corona from Korzo. The Pharmacy Shop No.1 on the left side.



The busy and prosperous Korzo in tranquil period between World Wars.



buquar

Korona szálló

“Passage Bata”—on right, “Kovacs & Rosenberg” passenger and freight haulage company (Freight shipping offices were at Radvanka). Hotel Corona behind of park-



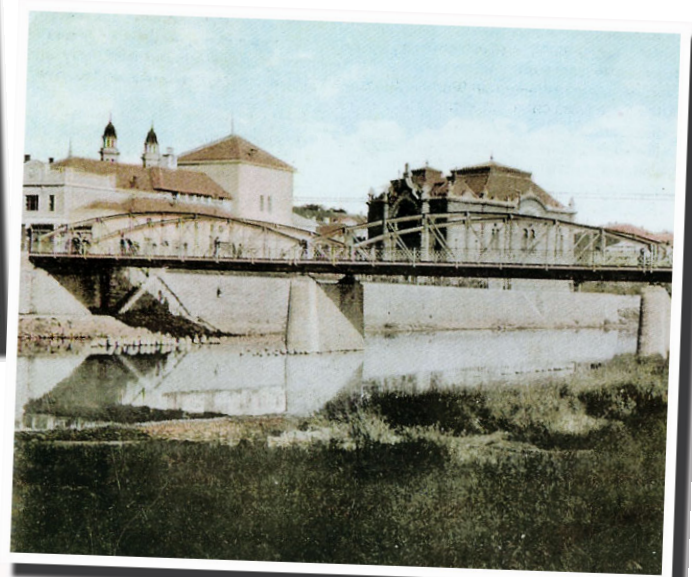
No.71, Mukacsevskaja Street, where were the flourmills of brothers Michael and Izidor Weise, today still the industrial complex of the bread backing and flour products.



Postcard from beginning of XX century.



Old postcard of the footbridge with theatre building.



View on footbridge from left bank with theatre and synagogue on background. Pictured around 1920's.



Stalin Square pictured in beginning of 50's last century, now it has been named Petófi Square.



River Uzh, 2004.



Uzhgorod railway station where Jews in Spring of 1944 were deported to death camps from.

**More than 6000 Jewish citizens of Uzhgorod were murdered by German Nazis.** Until now there is no monument erected in town, where to people would come to pay respect and remember our martyrs.

Here the railway station of Uzhgorod – from its platforms people were rounded up in to cattle car boxes and trains taken them away to death camps. The whistle of the steam locomotive pounds and a train with doomed load is going to nowhere...

Photo of railway station with caption "Uzhgorod railway station where thousands of Jews were loaded into cattle trains and taken to death camps"

Prior of Nazis deportation in Subcarpathia reside approximately 140,000 Jews. After end of the WW II returned home some 7,000 only.

**N**ame of Uzhgorod (Ungvár) has been written in history of Judaism forever. Jewish sages – the great thinkers, who focussed their lifelong efforts for comments and interpretation of Torah. Among those wise men - Rebbe Shlomo Ganzfried, who wrote in 1864 the book "Kitzur Shulchan Aruch"- the abridged Code of Jewish life: how to Jew to behave, how to pray, how to fulfil mitzvot (commandments), how to live every day, in weekdays, at Shabos and Holidays, how to keep traditions of Jewish life...

( **Kitzur Shulchan Aruch** - Concise digest of halacha by R. Shlomo Ganzfried (Hungary, 1804-1886). R. Shlomo intended his work for use by laymen and therefore did not cite sources for his rulings. He also did not include those halachos that had no practical application to most people. The Kitzur Shulchan Aruch became an immensely popular work soon after its publication due to its clear and precise presentation of halacha. It has been updated by a number of authors to include those halachos applicable in Israel. )

Rebbe Shlomo Ganzfried, who

lived and worked in Uzhgorod, left an eternal footprint in history of our land and of the Jewish people.

The Jewish cemeteries of Uzhgorod are memorials of perpetuity of Jews of this town. There are priceless Jewish necropolises, where remain mazevos (tombstones) of XIX century, stellar-shape tombstones with plastica carvings, some of it more than two centuries old. The old Jewish mazevos are usually carved in hard stone, presenting the spiritual essence and personal merits of person buried here. By Jewish custom no sculpture or picture of person

allowed – this was strictly forbidden, especially in Jewish cemetery. But we can find here plenty of the cult symbols. Very often we can find here menorahs (of three, five or seven candles) as symbols of woman's godliness, piety connected to mitzvah of candle lighting; pair of blessing hand palms when parted fingers are showing two letters "shin" – this person belonged to "cohanim". The carving of the Jug told that man belonged to tribe of "Levy" – "levyim" were serving in Holy Temple. Some tombstones ornamented with crown, telling that this person got a high destiny – so he was crowned. Depiction of lion pointed up to name Leib (Ariye), red deer – to name Girsh (Tzvi), bird – for woman's name Feigele (Tzipora), fishes – man's name Fischl... This cemetery contains a lot of tombstones decorated with Crowns. Pictures, presenting the floral themes are hinting on fruitfully activities of the person. Most of carvings are showing very high craftsmanship and impress with beautiful compositions.



( Pictures of tombstones with comments from site <http://www.judaica.kiev.ua/muzeum/bazadann/Frameset.htm> )

In the quaint, intricate decorative forms of tombstone carvings with plenty abundance of little details one can see influence of baroque taste of beginning of XIX century.



Stone carved mazevos not just monuments – they are part of Jewish national culture. Regrettably the wars, human ignorance and, often, simply vandalism caused a huge damage to our heritage, but some of these are kept intact. Nameless craftsmen animated the stone, left their art to future generations.



**U** are standing on lawn, here stands alone a high matzeva to Rabbi with following epitaph:

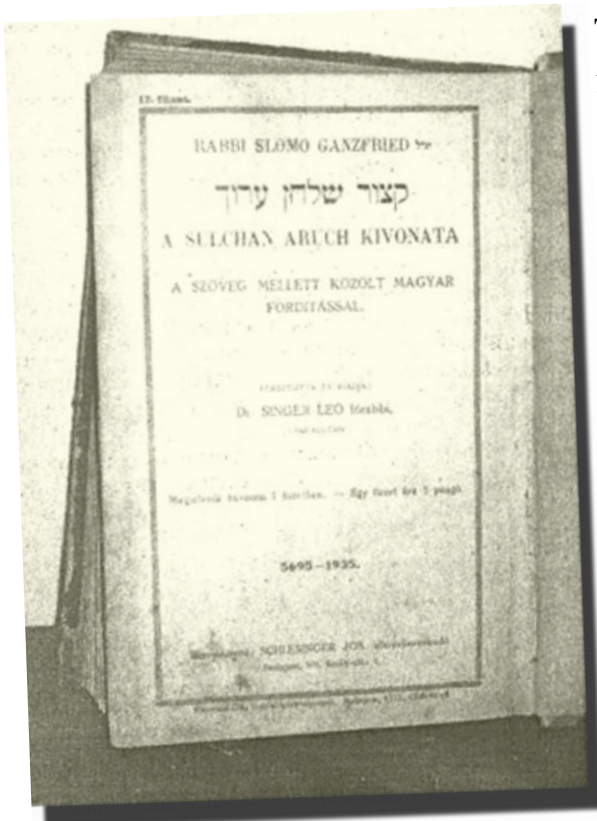
"Rebbe [the Teacher] – a true genius, be known in every country. He created books of cosmic importance. In our imperfect universe he was a pure Tzadik [Righteous Person]. Shlomo Ganzfried son of Reb Josef... Be his soul for eternity."

The carved picture on his matzeva presenting the major craft of Rabbi Shlomo: writing hand with pen telling about his Heavenly purpose. He created a book which today is a world famous – a unique monument of Jewish culture.

The two Jewish cemeteries of Uzhgorod are the place of religious pilgrimage. Jews from many countries coming to pray on graves of their ancestors and righteous people. In Jewish tradition – the prayer on gravesite of Tzadik brings on a special power.



Here also stands symbolical memorial tombstone to Jews



The “Kitzur Shulchan Aruch” compiled by Rabbi Shlomo Ganzfried was first published in Uzhgorod in 1864. Here is the front page of the book, translated to Hungarian, published in Budapest in 1935.



Tombstone on Rabbi Shlomo Ganzfried grave (1804-1886). Pictured at 2000.



Memorial to martyrs of Holocaust in Uzhgorod Jewish cemetery, erected in 1996 by donation from Mr. Laci Reisman.




Cenotaph to soldiers fallen in WWI near to Radvanka ceme-



Uzhgorod Jewish cemetery. Pictured at 2000.

perished in Holocaust. It was erected in 1996 by donation from Mr. Laci Reisman, who also was citizen of Uzhgorod and now lives in Ramat Gan, Israel.

“Remember and not forget. In Uzhgorod, in past named Ungvár, 14 thousand Jews of the town and its outskirts were deported to Auschwitz. This monument is erected for memory of our dear who perished in Holocaust” – we read the epitaph on the commemorative plaque.

 ncestors of present-day Jews of Subcarpathia witnessed and experienced many of historical events that happened in this country.


How we arrived on Radvancz Hill.

In IX – VII centuries B.C. on territory of contemporary Uzhgorod were created two settlements: one on the Castle (Zamkovaja) Hill, and second – on Radvancz (Radvanskaja) Hill. Historian of Subcarpathia Jakov Schternberg dated the first settlement on Radvancz Hill to year 1363. The names of settlement were changing: Radvovanch, Radvanj, Rodvanz, Radvanka etc.

In 1828 in Radvanka were 108 house holds with 472 habitants, 138 of those were Jews (29.2%). In 1869 there were already 323 Jews.

The size of Jewish congregation in Radvanka was second after Greek-Orthodox.

And so centuries passed over Radvanka.

 he very old cemetery, where the Jewish citizens of Uzhgorod and Radvanka had been buried, is situated behind of the Christian cemetery, and it is a very old one.

The time and humans almost destroyed the old cemetery which now is covered by overgrown lush weeds and surrounded with collapsed stone fence. In between of the wild

vegetation here and there scattered all around old broken mazes, some with carved texts, and some with Judaic symbols: two open hand palms, lions, candles... Here is some stones with readable names: “Righteous man with wise heart Tzvi Meyer”, “Menachem Ari”, “Friedman Solomon (1837-1918)”, “Rosenstein Abraham son of Aaron”...

We are descending from the top of the cemetery's hill. And here we see an exceptional monument of the WW-I. This country many times, during its long history, was an amphitheatre of cruel battles. At autumn and winter of years 1914 -1915 a lot of battles happened here between Austro-Hungarian and Russian armies. A dozen of monuments left in Subcarpathia as remembrance to soldiers, fallen during WW-I, one of the monuments is staying in Radvanka cemetery. The plaque on monument inscribed in Hungarian the names of fallen soldiers and officers, and between these names a lot of Jewish surnames: Jacob Bloom – private, Jacob Kleisner – private, Schwartz Gyula – first class private (Schwartz Gyula was a maternal uncle of my deceased father – *Translator*).

At dawn of 40-s of XX century there were 1402 Jews in Radvanka, their Rabbi was Mayer Katan and there was a synagogue we mentioned earlier. This village was a real multinational settlement of working class people serving the needs of neighbouring Uzhgorod: shoemakers, locksmiths, butchers, balagoles- horse and cart owners, tailors, bakers, medics, waiters... There known the name of the owner of local hotel – Zoltan Klain. Most of Radvanka's Jews shared the dreadful fate the rest of the Jews of Uzhgorod – they fallen as martyrs in Holocaust.

“Here are living... the Jewish tradesmen and Jewish small merchants, poor Jews and rich Jews, poor Rusins and very poor Rusins... Tightly knit to-

gether at common place of living they can not exist ones without others” – such statement about Jews in Subcarpathia left by Ivan Olbracht, world famous author, son of Czech father and Jewish mother (1882-1956).

In March 1931 Ivan Olbracht visited Subcarpathia. There still his apartment in Uzhgorod at No.12 Ivan Olbracht Street transformed into Museum.

Most of his time in Subcarpathia Ivan Olbracht stayed in village Kolocsa (180 kilometres from Uzhgorod). He wrote a great number of stories, which were acquainting us with the life of Jews of that period of time. Without these accounts we simply never would know about that distant world. His writing was truthful and realistic and since very few written documents are left of that era, that why we so often refer to his testimonies.

 Jews always had what to say to the world. Perhaps that why so many Jewish teachers, painters, poets, writers and musicians are known and remembered around the world and across the times. And there no exceptions in this region of the world – the Jews gave the talents and genius of their sons and daughters as a big gift to peoples of Subcarpathia, promoting this country among nations of the world. We proudly can mention names of such artists as painters G.Gluck and M.Roskin, writers M.Teveljov and F.Krivin, scientists J.Sternberg, N.Aisenberg, G.Kotiljanski, A.Rot, F.Dvorcin, S.Margolin, A.Turkstaulb, O.Podrazhanski...

Alas, the history was cruel to Jewish cultural heritage in Subcarpathia. First – the Holocaust, and then – the Soviets between 40s and 90s of XX century destroyed or removed from people's sight almost everything that had belonged to a Jewish rich legacy. We hope very much, that remains of this affluent heritage will be discovered and restored from ashes





Ivan Olbracht (1882-1956)

highlight in our memory and consciousness what is dear to Jewish people and we hope we will continue our journey into past, assuming that the idea to restore and keep the memories and history of Subcarpathian Jews is not hopeless.

Monuments are quiet witnesses and reminders of the history. But today, thanks G-d, there still live witnesses too. Among our ancestors were different people: some - volatile, some - righteous, some - fulfilled their purpose in this world, and many of them were martyrs for Kiddush Hashem.

**R**emembering the past, let say some words about present days.

Today the Jewish life is re-incarnating at Ukraine.

Following decision of the Conference of leaders of Jewish organisations and communities in Subcarpathia, along with support of "Joint" [The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee](#) - (AJJDC) there was established the charity fund "Chessed Shpira".

"Chessed" translated from Hebrew is - care, charity

"Shpira" – Chaim Lazar Shpira - the Rabbi of Munkacs at 30s of XX century was world famous keeper and follower of Chassidic traditions. Care, charity and help – this is the core activities of this Fund.

As in Proverbs is stated - "one who tends to charity will find a good name".

When asked by Tinnius Rufus (the evil Tinnius Rufus, was the Roman governor of Judea during the rule of emperor Hadrian, at 132 A.D. plowed up

the Temple Sanctuary and its environs): "Why does your G-d, being the lover of the needy, not Himself provide for their support?", R. Akiba replied: "By **charity** wealth is to be made a means of salvation; G-d, the Father of both the rich and the poor, wants the one to help the other, and thus to make the world a household of love" (Bava Batra 10a).

"Blessed is he that considereth the poor; the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble."

The acts of charity were always distinguishing feature of Jewish people.

"Chessed Shpira" offers help to all in need, assists to restore the Jewish traditions, culture and encourages people to be involved in community life.

Let's remember, that only our acts of charity have significance and only our good deeds are important in this world!

and we will know the names of people of past and their achievements.

There is a saying that towns are having a soul. If you are walking along the old streets of Uzhgorod you almost can hear a whisper of voices of the people who gone.

The old buildings are remaining us the living history of the people.

Telling the story about memorial places of the Jewish history we almost did not discuss their architectural significances. Every such a building contains some expression of the style of its specific time, however combines the best achievements of the world art and fashion and the Jewish traditions and heritage at same time. And there are also the beautiful river-banks and bridges over the river Uzh, abundance of old parks and gardens...

The history of Jews in this region of Europe was like a long journey along unlit and winding road...

It is very important and significant for us to remember everything what happened in this journey.

We went on the pat trying to shed a light on the past of our people with tiny ray of light, to



The team of "Chessed Shpira" in Uzhgorod.