

The year General Population Jews

1765	????	26
1808	1,022	169
1827	1,563	497
1857	2,171	986
1860	2,275	1,111
1884	2,745	1,386
1908	3,404	1,542
1921	1,856	514

The town of Novogrod lies next to where the Pisa river runs into the Narew river, approximately 14 km from the city of Lomza. Already in the 14th century that area was inhabited and it later became a fortress for the squires of Mazovia. Novogrod developed and acquired a "Gemina" or community center for the surrounding villages. The Gemina also served as the religious center of the Catholic Church (Parafiah). The populace was involved in agriculture, small business and fishery. In the year 1400 Yanosh the elder, who was the squire of Mazovia, dedicated a church in that place. It seems that at this time, **(here begins page 297)** he had the rights of the city, for in 1434, the city originally was granted rights, he only needed to newly authorize those rights, which were already in existence from before. **(A bit of a loose translation, but the main idea is there.)**

On that side, there was the meeting of two rivers and next to the junction from Lomza to Krolovitz (Konigsberg) it transformed Novogrod to be in the 16th century a place for merchants in the surrounding villages. In the year 1564 there were already in Novogrod 307 {cut off}, (among them three stone masons) and many other places of work. It is known that in Novogrod there were 4 shoemakers and 16 wagon drivers. Until the 17th and 18th centuries the city was destroyed a number of times (twice as a result of a fire and one time from of a foreign army). *In the year 1615 a fire broke out in the city and burned down the*

majority of its houses. However, Novogrod was hastily rebuilt from new. In that time, there were already 17 flour mills and 14 beer distilleries. In the year 1672 (cut off), the fishermen of Novogrod even received the rights to fish freely in the rivers Narew. The city was once again destroyed by the Swedes in the year 1652, however the city was again swiftly rebuilt. In the year 1778, Novogrod was once again destroyed however this time the city was not rebuilt until the middle of the 19th century. The changes in government that affected the area at the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century also affected Novogrod. In the year 1860 there were already many work days in the small factories producing textiles, 8 factories for skinning, a factory producing bricks, a factory for soap, a candle factory, an elementary school and a shelter for the poor. At the end of the 19th century Novogrod became a "gemina" (community center for the surrounding villages).

The beginning of the Jews inhabiting Novogrod took place in the 15th century, however the number of Jewish residents then was very small. In the 16th and 17th centuries there were no limits regarding where Jews could live and conduct their business affairs, because the city was then under the private ownership of the aristocracy and they were interested in Jewish residency. According to a sectional investigation (census?) that was conducted during the year 1765, those who paid head-tax only numbered 26. Jews were involved in minimal work and business.

With the increase of the population in the 19th century the Jews became approximately 50 percent of the general populace and the majority of small production was under their ownership: textile factories; plants producing skins, brick production plants; and the production plants for soap and candles. The crossing of the River Narew was also under Jewish ownership. An important source of Jewish livelihood in the area was the market day that occurred twice -a-week.

The vast majority of workers in Novogrod were Jewish. In the year 1892, 32 out of 44 workers in the city were Jewish; 23 of them held the certification of "craftsman": 8 tailors; 7 shoemakers, 3 carpenters; one tanner; one leather maker; one glass blower and one baker.

In Novogrod there has been an organized Jewish community since the 17th century. During that period the central synagogue was constructed from wood and was preserved until the Holocaust period. At the time of the war with the Swedes, in the middle of the 17th century, the community became impoverished and the number of constituents decreased. However at the beginning of the 19th century there were two synagogues in the city. Only the names of those Rabbis who served in Novogrod after the 19th century, are known to us. In the middle of the 19th century, the Rabbi of Novy-Dvor was R' Tzvi Plotrovitch. Between the years 1886 and 1912, R' Noach the son of R' Yisroel Yaacov Veiner served as Rabbi. R' Noach passed away at the age of 75 and after his death the community broke into a storm between the two competing individuals for the post of Rabbi: R' Shmuel Shapiro the son-in-law of R' Noach Veiner, and R' Shmuel Hirshbein, the son-in-law of the town's wealthy timber merchant, who was supported by the merchants and the Chassidim. In the end R' Hirshbein was victorious and he served as Rabbi from 1914 until the Holocaust period.

In the town the traditional Jewish social groups were active in providing social assistance: "Gemilas Chassadim", "Tomchei Aniyim" (supporting the poor), "Hachnosas Kallah" as well as a group, unique in its character- the "Chevra Sandlarim" (the Shoemaker's Association). This last mentioned group was established in the year 1909 upon the initiative of the town's

shoemakers and tailors who requested to pray together, however the organization was also established to collect money for the workers' needy families. Before the First World War another organization was established in the city, the organization of "*Tiferes Bachurim*".

In the early days of the First World War the Jews of Novogrod were expelled under the orders of the High Officer of the Russian Army in the area. However even for those residents who were permitted to remain, their lot did not improve. Life in the town was at the discretion of each army officer that arrived. This continued until 1915 when the Germans conquered (the city) and it was completely evacuated. That year, and more so after the war ended, the Poles began to return to Novogrod. However the Jewish residents had been scattered far and wide; many had settled in Lomza and were aided by the local Jews. In the year 1916, during the period of German conquest, about 150 Jewish families returned to Novogrod. They had great difficulty supporting themselves and attempted to rebuild the ruins of their homes. But the Jewish community in Novogrod never returned to the same status that it had enjoyed before the First World War.

During the Russian rule, there were no elections for a city council; the Poles appointed a Jew whose job it was to represent the Jewish matters. Before the First World War the Jewish representative in the council was R' Moshe Elye Morgenshtein, a Zionist and community activist. During the Polish independent rule they were elected to the city council, which appointed twelve people, (including) three Jews.

Until the 1920's local town residents sat on the community committee but in the late 1920's the majority of the committee members were Zionists. The beginnings of the Zionist sections in Novogrod were established before the First World War and their main achievement was the founding of a library. In 1917, during the German conquest, a Zionist organization was established in Novogrod called "*Hatechiya*", however at the beginning of the Polish independent it split in two: 50 members established "*Tze'irei Tziyon*" and only ten remained in "*Hatechiya*". In 1925 the united movement of "*Poalei Tziyon* - (Socialist Zionists) was formed in Novogrod that ran a branch activity. Beginning in 1922 "*Histadrut Tziyonut I'Tarbut*" (Organization of Zionist Culture) was active in Novogrod and it established a library in the name of Y.L.Peretz. (Here begins page 298.) On the eve of the Second World War this library had 1000 books in Yiddish, Hebrew and Polish and it was transformed into a cultural center for Jewish youth from the whole surrounding area. During this period of time the number of evening classes focusing on Hebrew and knowledge of the Land of Israel increased, they had been set up next to almost every branch of the Zionist parties and movements. At the end of the 1920's the group "*Hashomer Hatzair*" was founded.

In the early 1920's the "*Hachalutz*" movement began its activities in Novogrod. Many of the town's youth joined its ranks. There were also those who turned to the movement "*Hachalutz Hamizrachi*" through the local "*Mizrachi*" branch. In 1929 "*Hachalutz Hatzair*" was founded and had appointed 80 members. Because of the (fine) natural conditions and spectacular view (scenery), the local district "*Hachalutz*" gatherings were held in Novogrod and the training settlements and camps were held then. During the elections for the 15th Zionist Congress that were held in 1927, 25 shekalim (??) were sold in Novogrod. The voters were divided as follows: three for "General Zionists", three for "*Mizrachi*" and 19 for the group of Socialist Zionists.

In the late 1930's the local peasants and inhabitants perpetrated anti-Semitic outbursts. Guards were stationed in the entrances of Jewish stores to stop Christian buyers entering. From time to time Polish peasants would come from the villages and "turn over" the stalls in the market that were owned by Jews.

We do not possess information about the lot of the Jews of Novogrod during the Second World War. It is only known that with the outbreak of war in 1939, almost the entire town was burned as a result of the German bombardment and that the majority of the residents fled to Lomza. Speculation is that the Jews of Novogrod, like the Jews of towns in the region, were moved to the Lomza ghetto in July 1941 and from there they were moved on the 2nd of November 1942 to the concentration camp in Zambrov. It is known that the majority of the inmates of the Zambrov concentration camp were sent to Auschwitz between the 11th and 13th of January 1943. Out of the 300 Jewish families who lived in Novogrod, no remnant remains. The only survivors are those who managed to immigrate before the Second World War to the United States and to the Land of Israel.