

KALVARIJA << *Encyclopaedia Judaica*.

KALVARIJA (Pol. Kalwaria; Rus. Kalvariya), town in S.E. Lithuania. Jews who had settled there, including several families of weavers, received a grant of privilege in 1713 to engage in commerce and crafts independently of the guilds, and permission to build a synagogue. A new synagogue was built in 1803.

The community numbered 1,055 poll tax payers in 1766 and 6,508 persons (over 80% of the population) in 1856. During the 1860s many Jews in Kalvarija immigrated to the United States, and by 1897 the community had decreased to 3,581 (37%). Isaac Slonimer, author of *Emek Yehoshu'a*, and Mordecai Klaczko (also called Mordecai Melzer), author of *Tekhelet Mordekhai*, served as rabbis in Kalvarija. Other prominent scholars and communal workers included Baer Ratner and Isaac Meir Margoliot. During World War I there was a further decline in the Jewish population when, owing to the war and a fire which broke out in 1915, many Jews moved to towns in Russia and Lithuania. Their numbers had decreased to 1,233 by 1923 (27%). The gradual nationalization of the agricultural import trade, from which Jews largely derived their livelihood, led to further emigration, and by 1939 only 1,000 Jews remained in Kalvarija. During the period of Lithuanian independence (1918–40) the community had five synagogues and three Jewish schools, a loan bank, and communal and cultural institutions.

Following the outbreak of World War II Jewish refugees from nearby Polish towns arrived in Kalvarija where they were warmly received by the community. After the Germans occupied Kalvarija on June 22, 1941, the Jews were brought to the Marijampole barracks on August 30 with thousands of other Jews from the area and murdered.

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