

SOSNOWIEC

Sosnowiec, in the Upper Silesia region, owed its rapid development to the Industrial Revolution: the opening of the first coal mines at the beginning of the nineteenth century and the subsequent establishment of metal and chemical factories. The city was not granted municipal status until 1902. The first Jews who settled in Sosnowiec came from nearby Będzin and Olkusz; until 1899, communal matters were handled through the Będzin kehillah (Jewish community). Jews were primarily employed in commerce and crafts, but there were also Jewish coal-mine operators and industrialists as well as many Jewish workers and professionals. A Jewish labor movement began early in the twentieth century organized by the Jewish socialist Bund and Poalei Zion (Workers of Zion). By the interwar period, the Jewish community had developed a range of Jewish institutions, including a hospital, secondary schools and associations of Jewish artists, merchants and industrialists.

The Germans entered Sosnowiec on September 4, 1939. Jews were immediately attacked, and on September 9, the Great Synagogue was set on fire. From May to August 1942, more than 10,000 Jews were deported to nearby Auschwitz-Birkenau. Two ghettos were then established: one in the suburb of Środula, the other in Stary Sosnowiec. From May to August 1943, most of the Jews were shipped to Auschwitz-Birkenau. Several hundred Jews continued to work in slave-labor factories until January 1944. In the ghettos, there was considerable underground activity organized by Jewish youth organizations. Several hundred Jews settled briefly in Sosnowiec after the war.

Location

58 km S of Częstochowa

50°17' / 19°03'

Voivodship: Katowice

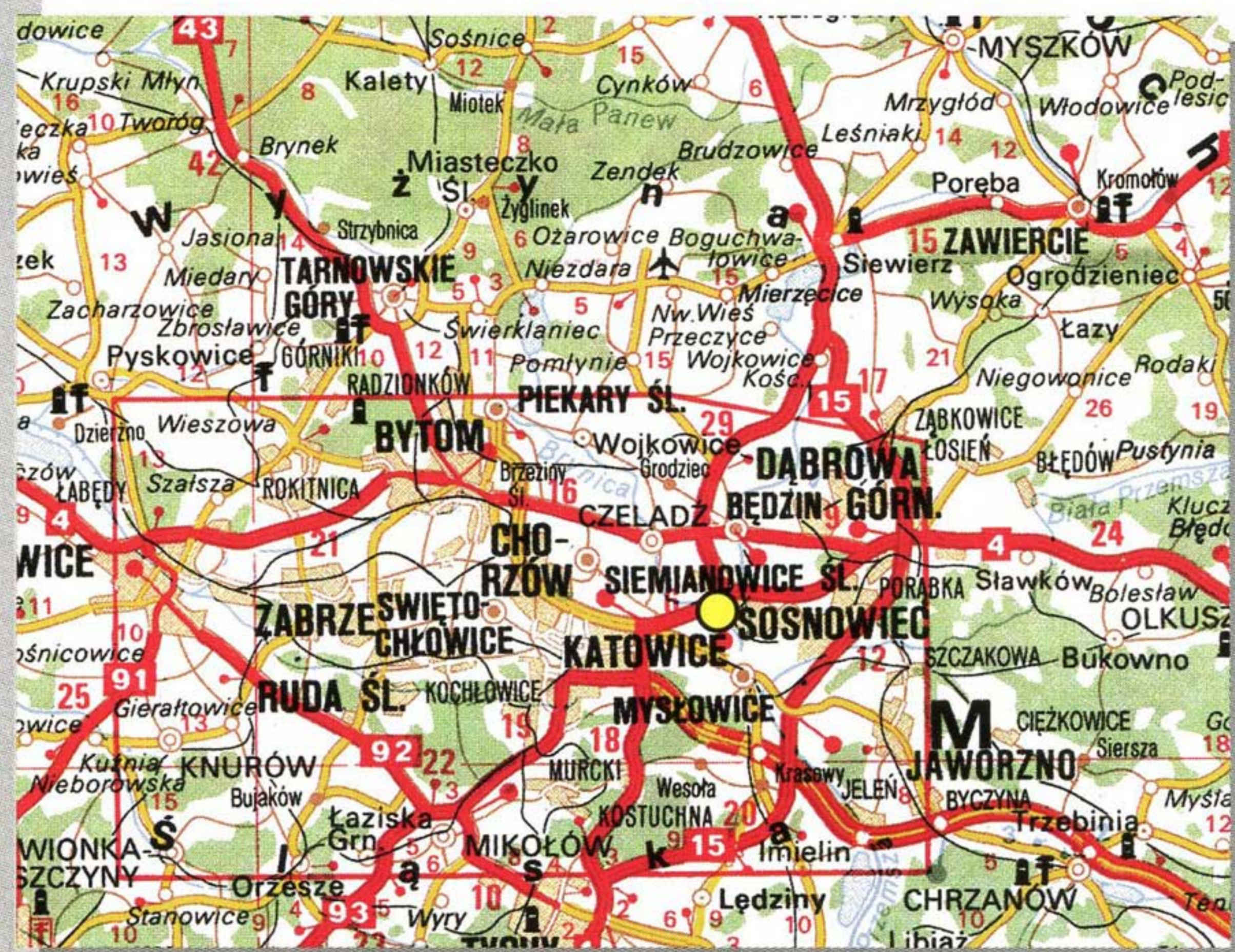
General Population, 1939

130,000 (22% Jewish)

General Population, 1994

250,000

SOSNOVICE, SOSNOVITZ, SOSNOVYETS



SYNAGOGUES

ul. Dekerta

Great Synagogue, built in 1894.

Burned by the Nazis on September 9, 1939.

ul. Floriańska

Synagogue no longer exists.



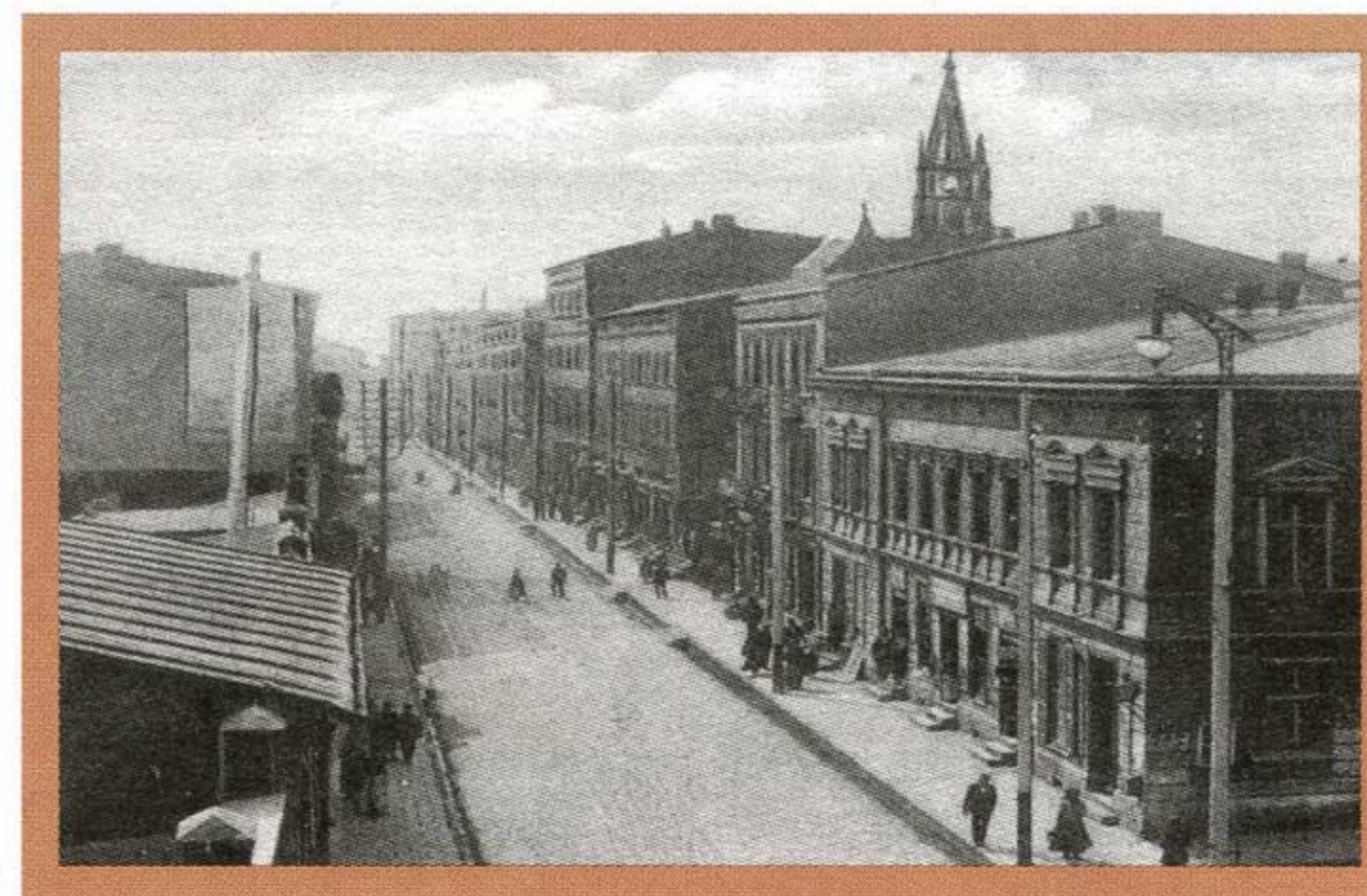
ul. Targowa 12, Bet Midrash, pre-1939

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ul. Kolejowa, c. 1917

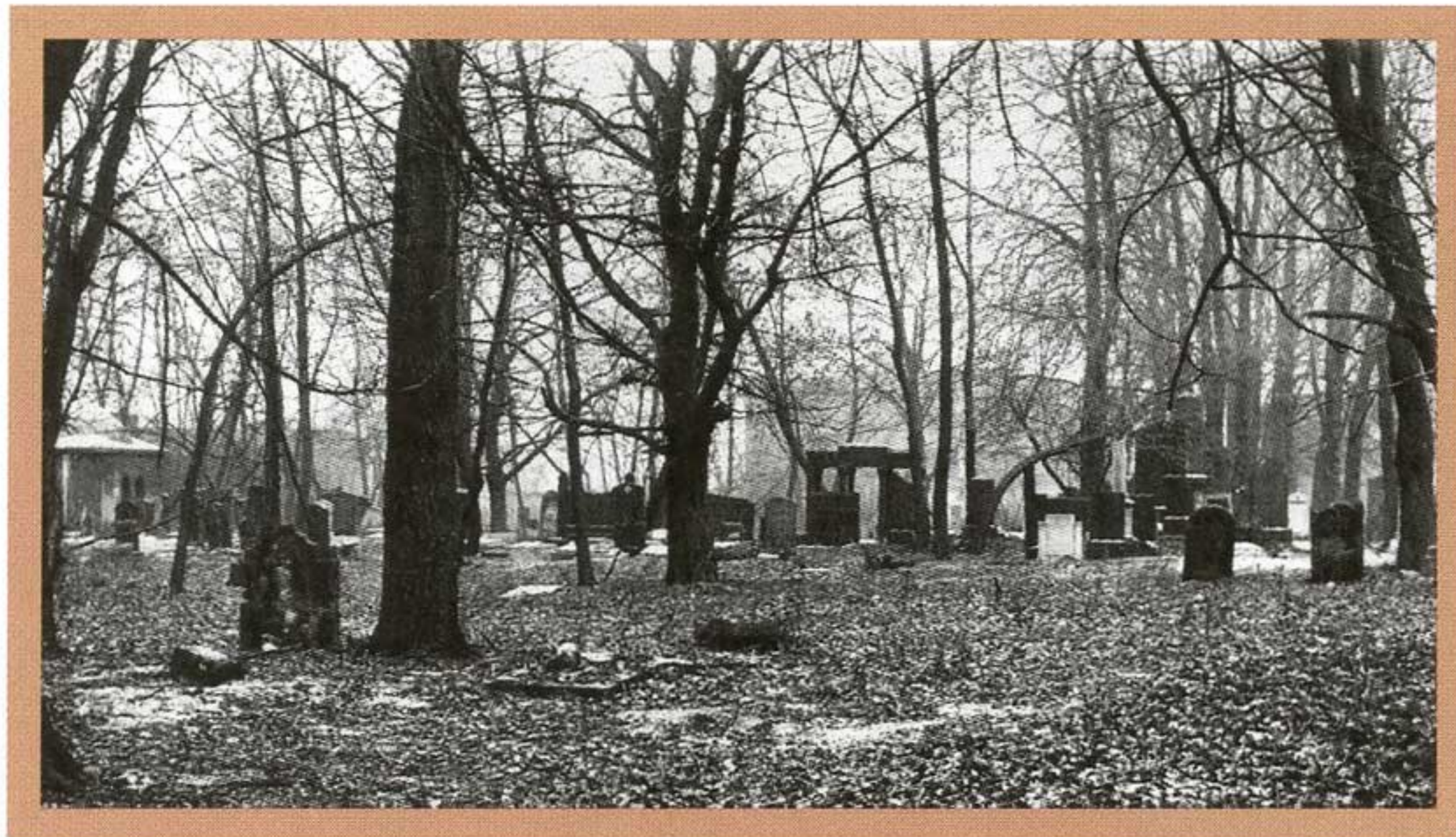
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ul. Modrzejowska, c. 1917

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SELECTED READING



■ Cemetery, ul. Gospodarcza 1, 1984

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JEWISH CEMETERIES

ul. Gospodarcza 1

Remaining tombstones: 300+ dating from 1896.

Niwka Pasterna (region of Sosnowiec)

Cemetery founded in the nineteenth century.

A few dozen tombstones remain.

HOLOCAUST MEMORIALS

Memorial plaque in Gospodarcza cemetery

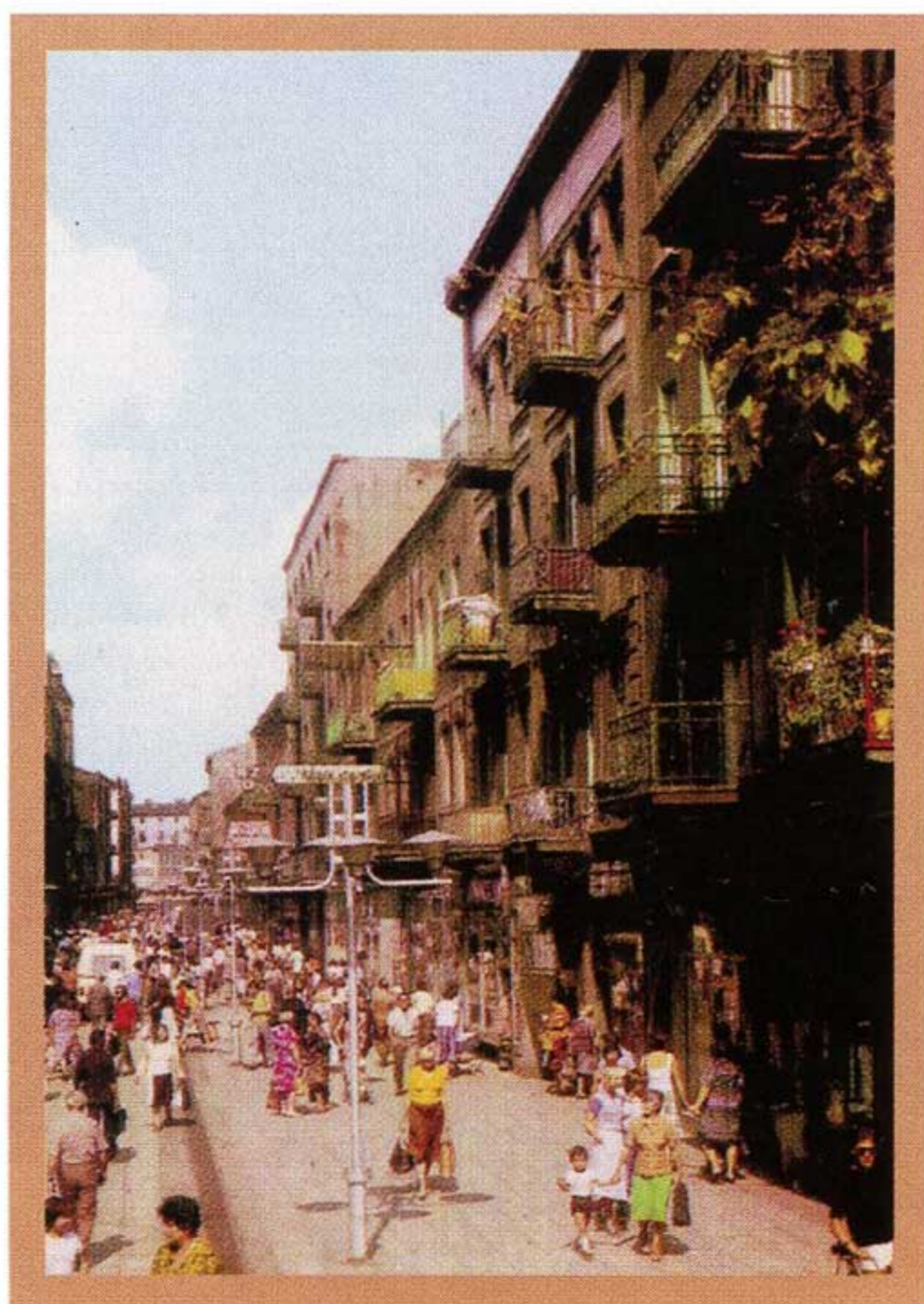
In memory of Jews killed from Sosnowiec and surrounding towns.

Środula quarter of Sosnowiec

Memorial plaque dedicated in 1985 to Jews killed in the ghetto.

DEPORTATIONS

Auschwitz-Birkenau, Tyszowce.



■ ul. Modrzejowska, today

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FILM

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BIBLIOGRAPHIC SOURCES

CAHJP; CTD; EDRD; EJ; EOH; GA; GUM3; GUM4; GUM5; GUM6; HSL; JGFF; KH; LDL; LVY; PJH; RJHS; SF