

Dedication and Opening of the Town's People's House (Dom Ludowy)

named after the 6th Infantry Legion Regiment of the Polish Army in Michališkės
on 13.07.1935 (13 Jul 1935)

from: Lithuanian Central State Archives (LCVA)
Polish Army 6 (album of the regiment's infantry legion)

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Dom ludowys (technically a *community house* or structure used in common by everyone in the community), were established by the Polish government and usually acted expressly for the Polish ethnic group (2/3 of the population of the Second Republic of Poland), with the policy aimed at *Polonization* of other non-ethnic-Polish groups (1/3 of the population), including Jews. They generally featured various Polish cultural activities such as literature, poetry, drama, etc. In the Polish language, *dom*=house; *ludowy*=people. Vital Zajka suggests that a *dom ludowy* was something of a meeting house with a large room and sometimes a library with newspapers and official editions like collections of government decrees and other documents, legal codes, etc.

Of the *dom ludowy* of Micháleshik, Urke Blacher wrote at the end of p. 4 of his *aufklar* version of his *togbukh* [later ca. 1988 donated to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM – 1988.92.3)]:

Someone gave the Germans a list of names of Jews who ostensibly belonged to the Communists, and one evening, someone cut the telephone wires. And this was all added to the account against the Jews. The result was actually a fatal one. They immediately arrested the following Jews: the Chazan and his son Reuben, Dovid Yoel, Avraham Gershater, Josef Swirski, Tsodik and his brother, Aron Shmuel Vaynshteyn, Yankev Badkhn, der *Gubezer*, Yakov Zaretsky and Hershel Meller, der *Yatziner*. They were all made to put on the red patches and were driven through all the streets and then locked up in the *dom ludowy* (community house) which was once Shloyme Moyshe's house.

[perhaps Shloyme Moyshe Rudnitsky, der Ritener's house given either as house. no. 88 or house no. 18 on Ester Katz Livingston's lists and her English version of Berl Klor's map, the two houses being directly across Vilno Str from each other.]

Another account of the incident described by Urke Blacher may be found at *Michaliszki* in Yad Vashem's *Pinkas Hakehillot Polin*, Vol VIII, p. 421 which occurred ca. 24 June 1941. It seems that unknown individuals damaged the German telephone and telegraph lines and blamed these acts on Jews. All the Jewish males were brought to the market square and 30 were later taken to the Jewish cemetery where they received 50 lashes of a whip, to be followed by shooting. At the last moment, German telephone technicians were summoned and supported the denials of Jewish involvement and recommended that Jews be used to guard the network. The 30 Jewish men were freed but several of them died from the brutal beatings.

Photo document information

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