



## **Brest-Litovsk - Encyclopedia of the Jewish Diaspora (Belarus) - Volume II Translation of Brisk de-Lita: Encyclopaedia Shel Galuyot**

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The name of the town, Brest-Litovsk, indicates its link with Lithuania. Although founded by the Slavs in 1017 and invaded by the Mongols in 1241, it became part of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in 1319, and in 1569 it became the capital of the unified Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The town is also known as "Brisk," in Yiddish to the Jews who lived and thrived there for six centuries. Jewish "Brisk" had an illustrious history; the famous Brisker Yeshivah attracted scholars from all over Europe. The list of Rabbis of Brest includes such famous rabbis as Solomon Luria and Joel Sirkes in earlier periods, the Katzenellenbogens, and three generations of the Soloveitchik dynasty in more recent times. Brest also produced Jacob Epstein the great Talmudist at the Hebrew University, Menachem Begin, and many other major religious, literary and political leaders. In 1923, Jews, made up 60% of Brest's population of 60,000. This book was written by Brest survivors and former residents from many countries who contributed their memories of their hometown as a record for future generations, and as testament and loving tribute to the innocent Victims of the Shoah. It is a must read for researchers of the town and descendants of "Briskers." Brest, Belarus is located at 52°06' North Latitude and 23°42' East Longitude 203 mi SW of Minsk. Alternate names for the town are: Brest [Belarussian], Brest Litovsk [Russian], Brze?? Litewski [Polish], Brze?? nad Bugiem [Polish, 1918-39], Brisk [Yiddish], Brasta [Lithuanian], Brest Litowsk, Brisk Dlita, Brisk de-Lita, Brze??-Litewsk, Brist nad Bugie, Bzheshch nad Buggyem, Bierac?cie

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