



The history of the Jewish cemetery in Radzymin

Key facts

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The first written document confirming the Jewish settlement in Radzymin comes from the second half of the 18th century and appears in the church documentation of the Płock Diocese. Forty-eight members of the Jewish community constituted at that time 6% of the entire population of Radzymin. The already existing Jewish cemetery was the burial site for the Jews from Radzymin but also for the deceased from neighboring towns. At the beginning of the 19th century the followers of the tzaddik Jakow Arie Guterman, a student of rabbi Symcha Bunam from Przysucha, began to settle in Radzymin. Thus Radzymin has become one of the most important centres of the Hasidic movement.

The Jewish cemetery in Radzymin is located at Mickiewicza street and has an area of more than 2 hectares. The entrance to the cemetery was located from the east whereas the main alley was marked out on the east-west axis. After the war the cemetery was levelled and turned into a park by planting poplars, maples and lime trees. The cemetery was closed for burials in September 1964 r. For many years the only object existing in the cemetery was a sarcophagus founded in the mid 80s on the site of the nonexisting ohels of the tzadikim. In a letter from August 1985 the Jewish Association in the Polish People's Republic (*Związek Religijny Wyznania Mojżeszowego w PRL*) requests from the local authorities a construction permit for "a concrete monument to be erected in a place of the non-existent rabbis' tomb". The next stage of securing and commemorating the cemetery was to build a fence. However for some reason this plan was never implemented.



Pic.1 Jewish cemetery in Radzymin, picture taken Willibald Pfahler, Infantry Regiment 62, from his service on the eastern front, 1941-1942, Yad Vashem Collection



Pic. 2 The Jewish cemetery in Radzymin in 1985, picture by Jan Jagielski

During the II WW the cemetery has become a killing and burial site of the Holocaust victims. The ghetto in Radzymin operated from the second half of 1940 till October 1942. Approx. 2500 people altogether were imprisoned there, approx. 700 people lost their lives during that time and their remains were buried in the Jewish cemetery in Radzymin (IPN GK 163/62). The Jewish cemetery in Radzymin was the location of the following events:

1. In the autumn or spring of 1940 the military policemen stopped and murdered two Jewish boys. Their bodies were buried in the Jewish cemetery. An eyewitness' account: "The older boy tried to escape but the younger one grabbed his trousers. At this point a military policeman approached, pulled away the younger boy and shot him in the head. The older one pulled out and ran to the other side of the street where the policeman's bullet reached him." (IPN BU 2448/1068)
2. In the spring of 1942 the military policemen from the local police station shot 4 or 5 Jewish women in the Jewish cemetery. Bodies of the victims were buried at the place of execution.

3. In the spring of 1942 or 1943 a military policeman shot a Jewish man called Maje in the Jewish cemetery. There is no information about what happened to the body.
4. In the summer of 1942 in the Jewish cemetery military policemen from the local police station shot a Jewish family: a barrister, his wife and their 7-year-old daughter. There is no information about the place of burial.
5. In the summer of 1942 military policemen shot 8 Jews in the Jewish cemetery. There is no information about the bodies.
6. In June 1942 military police shot 19 Jews (10 men, 5 women and 4 children) with automatic guns on the Jewish cemetery in Radzymin. A witness testified: "In June 1942 a cart full of Jews stopped near my house. [Among the Jews] there were women and children. I watched the event hidden behind the trees in my garden which was located near the Jewish cemetery. The Jews were escorted by military policemen on horseback. I recognised Hoppe, Radke and Cymbryk. Beating them with butts of their rifles they pushed the Jews off the cart and walked them to the cemetery. I didn't see the execution itself because I hid in my house. After a while, however, I heard automatic gunshots. After an hour I went to the cemetery. There was an old Jewish caretaker who was crying. Before leaving, Hoppe ordered him to bury the bodies before the evening – otherwise he would be shot as well." (IPN BU 2448/1068)
7. In October 1942 a military policeman from the local police station shot to death a Jew called Rybak (first name unknown) in the Jewish cemetery His body was buried at the crime scene.
8. In the autumn of 1942 the military policemen shot a Jewish woman, approx. 30 years old, in the Jewish cemetery. There is no information about the place of burial.
9. In the autumn of 1942 the military policemen shot approx. 20 people (including women and 4 or 5 children) in the Jewish cemetery. There is no information about the place of burial.
10. In the winter of 1942 the police officers and the military policemen shot to death 4 Jews in the Jewish cemetery. There is no information about the place of burial.
11. In January 1943 the military policemen shot 2 Jews who escaped from the ghetto in Warsaw. It was a father and his 7-year-old son. Their bodies were buried in the Jewish cemetery in Radzymin. A witness testified: "In January 1943 the military policemen from Radzymin, Hoppe and Radke, were walking past my house laughing loudly and joking. They were escorting a man and his 7-year-old son. Before they reached the cemetery, the boy tried to run – Hoppe shot him and a moment later he shot the father as well. I don't know the names of the victims." (IPN BU 2448/1068)

12. In August 1943 a German soldier shot to death a Jewish child in the Jewish cemetery. An eyewitness testified: “[...] Also in the same year I saw in Radzymin a German soldier from Wehrmacht, armed with a rifle, chasing a Jewish boy. He escorted him to the Jewish cemetery where he shot him. I saw it with my own eyes because as a young girl, out of curiosity, I followed them quietly and watched. I don’t know the name of the boy or that of his killer.” (IPN BU 2448/1067)
13. In the autumn of 1943 Nazis shot to death 14 Jews (men, women and children 4-5 years old.) Their bodies were buried in the Jewish cemetery.
14. In the autumn of 1943 a military policeman from the local police station shot to death a 5 or 6-year-old Jewish girl. There is no information about her body.

On 19 May 2015 a testimony by Leon N., a resident of Radzymin born in 1930 was recorded by the *Zapomniane* Foundation: “There were two killers [in Radzymin]: military policemen Hoppe and Radke. They had their headquarters where the gardening school is right now. They were leading a 17 or 18-year-old Jew from there. We used to ride bicycles here. I was 13 and I knew why they were escorting him because it was well known that they were persecuting Jews. I told my friend (he died by now): ‘Look, Jurek, they are probably leading him to be shot. Let’s hide. Be quiet because they will shoot us too.’ They were escorting him, he was a pretty boy. He entered [the cemetery.] The grave had already been prepared, dug by Mr Paciorek. He [the military policeman] shot him and he fell. When he fell, Mr Paciorek arrived, approached him, turned him around, took off his clothes and shoes, took a spade and buried him. Then the Germans left.” (Radzymin, 19 May 2015.)



Pic. 3 A funeral in the Jewish cemetery in Radzymin, the wall in the background went along the current Zielona street, picture taken by Willibald Pfahler, Infantry Regiment 62, from his service on the eastern front, 1941-1942, Yad Vashem Collection

Yad Vashem archives contains 969 pages of testimonies submitted by the survivors after the Holocaust about Jews who weren't murdered in labor or death camps but perished in the Radzymin ghetto. Most likely their bodies were buried in the cemetery.



Pic. 4 The sarcophagus built in the 80s of the 20th century, picture taken in 2005 by Jan Jagielski

The destruction of the Radzymin cemetery began during the German occupation. Some of the tombstones were stolen by the local people and used as a construction material both during and after the war. According to the local activists some of the houses erected in the neighbourhood of the cemetery were partly built of Jewish tombstones. Apparently some of the current owners are ready to give them back to the cemetery. Several recovered tombstones are displayed in the new ohel built in 2016 on the sarcophagus.

In its western corner the cemetery is crossed by a dirt road being the only existing road leading to the houses built after the war at Zielona street.

The cemetery chart created in 1985 describes the Jewish cemetery as “nonexisting” since it was devoid of tombstones. In 2021 a new chart was created and it states the following about the cemetery in Radzymin:





“A ruined cemetery, permanently transformed, the boundaries illegible. During WWII, the bodies of people who died or were killed in the local ghetto were buried in the cemetery. Among others, in 1942, many victims of the typhus epidemic were buried (sztetl.org). The place is commemorated by a modern ohel with three information boards, one of which was destroyed between 2006-2010, and several fragments of tombstones inside.”

The recommendation the author of the chart leave for the future is aiming at “full legibility and marking of the boundaries based on post-war cartography and maintenance of greenery.”



C 18. ELEMENTY CMENTARZA		Czy istnieją	I L O Ś Ć					23. Charakter rozplanowania cmentarza regularny
			Do XVIII w.	1 poł. XIX w.	2 poł. XIX w.	1 poł. XX w. (do 1945 r.)	2 poł. XX w.	
Mur ogrodzeniowy								24. Czytelność układu cmentarza: – całość – kwater, – nagrobków i mogił
Brama I-yl								
Kościół								
Kaplica I-el								25. Ogólny stan zachowania cmentarza (nagrobków i drzewostanu) Cmentarz nieistniejący, obecnie teren zagospodarowany zielenią.
Nagrobki:	wolnostojące							
	przyścielne							
Mogily								26. Istniejące zagrożenia
Inne elementy								
19. Które obiekty wpisane są do rejestru zabytków								
20. STARODRZEW		Ilość	Ø pnia w cm	Stan zdrowotny				
lipa								
kasztanowiec								
jesion								
tuja (żywotnik)								
21. Czy na terenie cmentarza znajdują się zarejestrowane pomniki przyrody ew. aleje								
22. Ogólny stan zachowania zieleni na cmentarzu Na terenie dawnego cmentarza zasadzono: lipy, klon, topole.								
27. Wnioski w zakresie prac: – porządkowych – remontowych – konserwatorskich								30. Wypełnił: Data: 1985
28. Wnioski w zakresie niezbędnej dokumentacji: – poszczególnych nagrobków – ewidencji całości cmentarza – studium historycznego – ewentualnie dokum. projektowej								
29. Inne uwagi służb konserwatorskich								

Pic. 5 The cemetery chart from 1985, National Institute of Cultural Heritage

ZAŁĄCZNIK AKTUALIZACYJNY DO KARTY CMENTARZA		3. Miejscowość <i>10152</i> RADZYMIN
1. Nazwa CMENTARZ ŻYDOWSKI w RADZYMINIE	2. Czas powstania poł. XVIII w.	
9. Materiały graficzne		4. Adres (ulica, nr posesji) Radzymin, ul. Mickiewicza (pd. strona)
 Geoportal - mapa topograficzna z lokalizacją cmentarza		5. Przynależność administracyjna Województwo mazowieckie powiat wołomiński gmina Radzymin
 Mapa WIG P39 S32 RADZYMIN wyd. 1934 r. 1:25 000		6. Współrzędne geograficzne 52.411353 / 21.187236
 Widok na teren cmentarza od wschodu		7. Użytkowanie obecne Teren zielony, park, częściowo gruntowe drogi
 Ohel cadyka Gutermana z fragmentami macew wewnątrz		8. Stan zachowania Zniszczony cmentarz, trwale przekształcony. Granice nieczytelne. Podczas drugiej wojny światowej na cmentarzu chowano zwłoki osób zmarłych lub zabitych w miejscowym getcie. Między innymi w 1942 roku pogrzebano tu wiele ofiar epidemii tyfusu". (źródło: szteti.org.pl). Miejsce upamiętnione współczesny ohelem z trzema tablicami informacyjnymi, z czego jedna z nich zniszczona między 2006-2010 r. oraz kilka fragmentów macew wewnątrz

Pic. 6 The cemetery chart from 2021, National Institute of Cultural Heritage

Bibliography and sources:

1. Recording of the Zapomniane Foundation (audio file), name: Leon [eyewitness], b. 1930, place of residence: Radzymin, subject and keywords: Jewish graves in Radzymin, interviewed by Agnieszka Nieradko, Radzymin, 19 May 2015.
2. IPN BU 2448/1067 from the files of the group of the Chief Commission for the Examination of German Crimes in Poland, Wołomiński district.
3. IPN BU 2448/1068 from the files of the group of the Chief Commission for the Examination of German Crimes in Poland Wołomiński district.
4. IPN GK 163/62, Questionnaire. Executions. Graves. Warszawskie province, volume III, Questionnaires about mass executions and mass graves in the warszawskie province.
5. The register of sites and crimes committed by the Germans in Poland between 1939 and 1945. Warszawskie capital province, Warszawa 1988, p. 250 – 252.
6. The archive of the Rabbinical Commission for Jewish Cemeteries in Poland
7. Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw
8. Yad Vashem Institute, Central Database of Shoah Victims' Names
9. The cemetery charts from www.zabytek.pl National Institute of Cultural Heritage (*Narodowy Instytut Dziedzictwa*)
10. The archive of modern records (Archiwum Akt Nowych)
11. <http://cmentarze-zydowskie.pl/radzymin.htm>