



Alternate names: Rybnik [Pol, Ger]. [50°07' N, 18°32' E](#) , 24 miles WSW of Katowice. Jewish population: 380 (in 1913). [Słownik](#)

[Geograficzny Królestwa Polskiego \(1880-1902\), X, pp. 62-64: "Rybnik"](#)

Normal 0 Jews settled here centuries ago. The Jewish kahal in Rybnik was established in 1858 with about 400 people. Jewish population: 1784-763 Christians and 42 Jews; 1843 for the district of Rybnik, 399 including 1 doctor, 3 merchants, 20 tradesmen, 50 restaurateurs, 15 craftsmen, 18 engaged in various work, and 1 beggar. After WWI and especially in 1921, the Jewish community with a German character witnessed an exodus of mainly wealthy German Jews and influx of poor Jews from

Zagłębie Dabrowskiego

and Jewish peddlers from

Rybnik Sosnowiec

,
Będzin

, and other localities. Rybnik was a garrison and customs office town with fairs for the Wodzisław to Pszczyna area. The first (wooden) synagogue was built in 1811 at ul. Raciborska. A new brick neoclassical synagogue with a Mogen David in the pediment and a bridge with balustrade entrance was built in 1842-1848 at the junction of ulic Zamkowej and Gimnazjalnej (now Zamkowej and Chrobrego in front of Town Hall). The interior of the synagogue was semicircular with high stained glass windows and a women' gallery. Baron Durand Baranowice loaned money for the construction of the synagogue because Rybnicka Jewish community lacked the necessary cash. At the end of 1939 or early 1940, the Nazis torched it with gasoline and kerosene. At the castle near the synagogue, passers-by passed the burning synagogue in silence while others made anti-Semitic remarks. Gestapo and police officers from

Schupo

enjoyed watching the burning building. In its place, the Nazis built a square with a fountain. The municipalities included doctors, merchants, brewers, factory owners and personnel, traders, craftsmen, teachers at the cheder closed in 1877, an educators'care facility that became the school music lasting until 2003 but was an orphanage in 1922 paid for by the Jewish municipality of Katowice and sold in 1927 to the Silesian Chamber of Agriculture. Between 1885-1890, local merchants become owners under forced auction of the steel mills on the river Ruda Rybniki called "Fa Lachman and metallurgical plants sztancownia and then also Silesia Sp.Akcyjna as well as breweries, coffee roasting, and large department stores. The iron trade, building materials, and restaurant were under Jewish control. When the war broke out in Rybnik, the Germans imprisoned the Jews at the castle, going to work under supervision. The

castle sojourn lasted little time, before they were sent to Gorzyce and Gorzyczek. Germany carefully erased all traces of the Jews, burning the synagogue and all Jewish community documents along with the kahał building and replaced these and the cemetery with parks. [June 2009]

CEMETERY: In 1815, these Jews buried their dead at the Jewish cemetery in **Mikołów** until Rybnik blacksmith, Józef Nowak, bought German burial ground for a 100 talarów to use as a Jewish cemetery. The bill of sale indicates that the site was on the way to Świerklan and Chwałowic at the junction of today's ul 3 Maja and Wieniawski. The police closed the cemetery in 1931 because of sanitary issues. From that time until 1939, they used the cemetery in **Wodzisławiu Śląski**

. At the March and April 1940, German occupiers destroyed the Jewish cemetery in Rybnik on orders of the Katowice Gestapo; prisoners were used to steal the gray sandstone gravestones for paving ul Chopina and the roads leading to the "Ruda" and bulldozed the site, even the shrubbery. They stole the lead and zinc and dismantled coffins for the copper and brass. Prisoners' blade hits skeletons and skull to break the jaw to remove teeth bridges. They searched for gold bracelets, rings, earrings, and teeth. Prisoners were not allowed to talk to one another. Some gravestones were trucked to the stadium "Ruda" still under construction near the former lagoons. Bones were throw into deep pits and back filled, possibly at the bottom of a pool. Today, the site is a park.

A fragment of stone gravestones from the cemetery was found in the rubble of matzevot broken up for paving. ul

Chopin (then called Parkstrasse in April 1940. While a house was being constructed at ul.Chopin 20, a gravestone fragment was found. Aware that it came from the Jewish cemetery, they said nothing and held onto it and eventually handed it over to the local museum. In May 2009, six locals recovered gravestones in the Rybnik Jewish cemetery. They were transferred to a local museum. At the end of the war, a death march of tens of thousands of prisoners passed through Rybnik going from Auschwitz to Wodzislaw during the night of January 17/18 as Auschwitz-Birkenau was being emptied. Dead bodies fell exhausted and starved in the bitter cold. A mass grave existed in the vicinity of the spa "Ruda". After the war, no Jews retruend. The President of the Society of Rybnik Friends, Zygmunt Podleśnego, commemorated the Jewish holy places in Rybnik, designing plaques near where once the synagogue and Jewish cemetery stood.

[Photos](#)

[June 2009].

US Commission No. POCE000560. In Katowickie. The US Commission is not finished

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