

RADOM

RADOM, city in Kielce province, Poland. The first Jews to visit Radom mainly traveled there as representatives of the Jewish communities at the sessions of the Polish Sejm (Diet) or to negotiate with the tribunal of the treasury, which met at Radom between 1613 and 1764. Jewish residence in the city was banned in 1633, 1724, and 1746; a few Jews settled in the suburbs and numbered 67 by 1765. They were later permitted to reside in a special quarter. The settlement began to develop after 1814, and an organized community was formed; a cemetery was established in 1831 and the first synagogue built in 1884. The community increased from 413 in 1815 (about 16% of the total population) to 1,495 in 1856 (23%); 11,277 in 1897 (37.6%); 24,465 in 1921 (39.7%); and 25,159 in 1931 (23.3%). Before World War I and during the period between the two world wars Jews played a considerable role in the development of commerce and industry in Radom, both as entrepreneurs and employed workers. Jewish organizations in 1925 included a merchants' and artisans' bank and trade unions; there were numerous welfare institutions, including the hospital, founded in 1847, and an old age home, founded in 1913. Religious and secular educational and cultural needs were met by yeshivot, the first founded in 1908, the *talmud torah*, and prayer houses (*shtiblekh*) for the ḥasidic community, as well as schools of various types, including a high school, and five libraries. Periodicals published in Radom during the inter-war period were the Yiddish daily *Radomer Tsaytung* until 1925; the weekly *Radomer Lebn*, later *Radomer-Keltser Lebn*; *Radomer Shtime*; and *Trybuna* (in Polish). The first rabbi of the community officiated at the beginning of the 19th century. Rabbis of note were Samuel *Mohilewer and Simḥah Treistman (1904–13), later rabbi of Lodz.

[William Glicksman]

Holocaust Period

In 1939 over 30,000 Jews, comprising 30% of the total population, lived in Radom. During the German occupation it was the capital of the Radom District in the General Government. The German army entered the city on Sept. 8, 1939, and immediately subjected the Jewish population to persecution. During the first months of German occupation, about 2,000 Jews from the Poznan and Lodz provinces were expelled to Radom. In turn, 1,840 Jews from Radom were expelled to the smaller towns in the Kielce Province (December 1939). In August about 2,000 young men and women were deported to slave labor camps, where almost all of them perished. In March 1941 a decree for the establishment of the ghetto was issued and by April 7, 1941, the entire Jewish population was concentrated in two separate ghettos. At the beginning of 1942 the Nazis conducted a number of terror actions within the ghettos, among them an action of February 19 ("bloody Thursday") when 40 men were shot, and on April 28, when 70 men were killed and hundreds deported to the concentration camp in *Auschwitz. On Aug. 5, 1942, the smaller ghetto was liquidated and its inhabitants (almost 10,000 people) were deported to *Treblinka death camp. On Aug. 6–17, 1942, the larger ghetto was liquidated and its 20,000 Jews dispatched for extermination. Within the part of the ghetto that was transformed into a slave labor camp (the "small ghetto"), only about 4,000 Jews remained. On Dec. 4, 1942, about 800 inmates of this camp were deported to Szydlowiec and afterward exterminated. On Jan. 13, 1943, another 1,500 prisoners were deported to Treblinka. On Nov. 8, 1943, the prisoners of the "small ghetto" were transferred to the newly established forced labor camp in the town. On July 26, 1944, all but 300 prisoners were deported to Auschwitz, where only a handful survived. The last 300 prisoners were liberated on Jan. 16, 1945.

At the time of the mass deportations in August 1942, hundreds of Jews fled to the forests to organize guerrilla units. Such units were composed mostly of persons who escaped from Radom. All the partisans fell in battles with the Germans. Many who escaped from Radom reached Warsaw and took part in the Polish Warsaw uprising (August 1944). In the whole Radom District 380,000 Jews lost their lives during the German occupation, according to figures of the Radom Regional Commission to investigate Nazi Crimes. A few hundred Jews settled in Radom for a short time after World War II, but soon left due to the hostility of the Polish population. Organizations of former Radom residents exist in Israel, the United States, Canada, France, and Australia. There were seven Jews living in Radom in 1965.

[Stefan Krakowski]

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