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Radio Krakow

Volunteers in Olkusz Excavate Jewish Gravestones from the Walls of the Old School

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In Olkusz, at a former high school on Pilsudski Street, the From the Depths Foundation and "Project Matzeva" brought volunteers from Poland and America, Jews and non-Jews together to return their Jewish tombstones - gravestones, which were used to build a former school wall.

"This is to restore the dignity of Jews during the war and after the war. This is an epidemic throughout the country. Before the war there were 1,300 cemeteries. More than 90% have been destroyed and the gravestones were used as building material. This is an excellent opportunity to Poles and Jews to do something together," says Lena Klaudel of the foundation.

The tombstones that are being excavated in Olkusz will go to the local Jewish cemetery. The Matzeva Project started eighteen months ago in Warsaw. Volunteers work throughout the country, in big cities and small towns. They have recovered several thousand tombstones.