

SZPARKOWSKI, Zdzisław
Polish Documentation Project
Polish
RG-50.225*0010

[approximately 80 min.]

SUMMARY

Zdzisław Szparkowski, the Righteous Among the Nations Award holder, was born in Włocławek. He was the youngest child in the family and lost his father at an early age. Mr. Szparkowski remembers attending technical school in Włocławek, where he got involved with PPS [*Polish Socialist Party*] along with many of his Jewish friends. He comments on good relations between the Polish and Jewish population until 1931. With the rise of radical anti-Semitic organizations, Włocławek was raided by Polish nationalists [*likely, Obóz Narodowo-Radykalny*] and Mr. Szparkowski took part in defending against them. After finishing school, Mr. Szparkowski joined the military and later worked in a steel plant, where he got acquainted with Mordechaj Anielewicz. He recalls being mobilized shortly before the war, then after Poland's defeat he escaped a Nazi military camp, and returned to Włocławek. There he was a witness to many repressions towards the Jews, which led him to participate in organizing Jewish evacuations to the ZSRR. After having been denounced by a local Pole, Mr. Szparkowski fled to Warsaw. He remembers organizing help for the Warsaw Ghetto Jews, alongside his Polish and Jewish friends from the Aryan side. Mr. Szparkowski distrusted organizations, such as Żegota, which were large enough for traitors to penetrate; and acted as a part of a small, independent group. Mr. Szparkowski talks in detail about supplying weapons to ŻOB in the Ghetto as well as providing shelter to several Jews, both in his own apartment and in the specially outfitted bunker. He funded these endeavors with profits initially made on minor trading, and later supplemented by a restaurant business. Mr. Szparkowski recalls one of the encounters with szmalcownicy. He comments on the inhuman Ghetto conditions and expresses his support for the Ghetto Uprising, when the Jews fought for their right to die in dignity; he condemns the Warsaw Uprising and sees it as a political play of the Polish Government in exile. He mentions working for the MSZ [*Ministry of Foreign Affairs*] after the war and talks about receiving the Righteous Among the Nations Award. He shows a photograph taken while visiting his friends and survivors together with families in Israel. Mr. Szparkowski feels offended that the Polish nation is blamed for the Holocaust and disagrees with the Polish anti-Semitic stereotype. He supports his opinion by providing facts about the Second World War and explains that despite the threat of death, the majority of Polish citizens offered to help the Jews. He is proud of the present-day Jewish achievements in preserving their language and culture, and fully supports Israel, the new Jewish state.

[The interview is relevant to Exhibitions; however there are some Q and A passages]

Prepared by Agnieszka McClure 09/08/2010