

POSYNIAK, Stefan
Polish Witnesses to the Holocaust Documentation Project
Polish
RG-50.488*0135

Tape 1

In this interview, Stefan Posyniak, who was born on September 2, 1922, in Janiszów (in the present-day district of Lublin), talks about his experiences and observations during the Nazi occupation of Poland. He focuses on his forced labor for the Germans in different Polish cities. He describes the persecution and humiliation of Jews and the killings in the nearby concentration camps in Janiszów and Rzeszów.

[01:] 01:07:17 – [01:] 10:11:03

He remembers the day of the outbreak of World War II and his staying in a hospital in Gościeradów, near Kraśnik, and his release when the first wounded were being hospitalized; describes his way back home; reports on the gathering of Polish units along the Wisła River and their preparation to fight back against the enemy; remembers his conversation with Polish soldiers and his suggestion to open fire toward the Germans but their refusal; discusses his return home and hiding in a shelter that was prepared by his father; remembers the shooting by both sides lasting all night; talks about the poor military equipment of the Polish units; remembers the bombing of a bridge; reports on the German occupation of his village around September 20; reports on their settlement in their own tents on the other side of the town of Zawichost and on their riding in rafts on the river; mentions the transport of Jewish men of different ages to this place by the Wehrmacht; reports on the plunder of Jewish shops and the robbery and removal of the materials of tailors and shoemakers; reports on the humiliation of Jews, which led some of them to commit suicide in the Sanna River.

[01:] 10:11:04 – [01:] 17:28:20

He describes the establishment of the work camp in Janiszów; reports on the forced labor of Jews in the icy waters of the Sanna River; comments on the past history of this work started before World War II; remembers the Jews being forced to sing in the mornings and evenings on their way to and from work; comments on the presence of three Jewish families in Janiszów before the war and aspects of their fate during the war; talks about the position and functions of one of them as a Jewish policeman in the camp.

[01:] 17:28:21 – [01:] 23:13:09

He reports on his stay in Rzeszów; talks about the absence of persecution of Jews at first; describes his forced work in a company of the defense industry; describes the worse treatment of Jewish forced laborers in the same company; discusses the amount and quality of food and soap; talks about the marking of the Jews with the Star of David and inscription "Jude"; reports that communication with Jewish colleagues was forbidden; talks about his colleague **Tadzio** and himself pretending to work; reports on **Tadzio's** punishment and his experiences and observations during his stay among the Jews in the nearby camp; reports on the mass

murder of around 1,000 Jews in the camp by the Germans; gives the probable total number of inmates at the camp as around 15,000.

[01:] 23:13:10 – [01:] 28:31:15

He talks about his observations in the former area of the work camp in his home village of Janiszów in 1950; reports on remnants such as rails, two grave mounds; comments on the reactions of local residents to the question of what had happened there; reports on his findings of what went on there during the war; reports on the stories of a witness who saw the liquidation of the camp; describes the process of burning the bodies during the liquidation operation.

[01:] 28:31:16 – [01:] 31:29:00

He discusses his experiences in the ghetto of Radom; reports on his forced labor in Radom; discusses his release from work to buy an overcoat; reports on his decision to go to the ghetto for cheaper prices; describes looking for and buying the overcoat; describes the uncontrolled ghetto life; reports that the ghetto Jews would trade with anything; talks about the hunger and the begging among children; discusses the presence of some Jews in partisan groups, such as the Narodowe Siły Zbrojne and Żab.