

**RG-90.148.0005**

**Summary from Radio Kielce**

**Episode 5: Hasag ammunition plant in Skarżysko. Zygmunt Jarosz. Tadeusz Nowak**

**08.04.2018**

<https://polacyratujacyzydow.com.pl/en/hasag-ammunition-plant-in-skarzysko-zygmunt-jarosz-tadeusz-nowak/>

### **Stories about Poles**

Zygmunt Jarosz

Tadeusz Nowak

### **Hidden people**

Chaim Śliski (1 of those rescued)

### **The story told by**

Lt. Col. Henryk Czech (memories of war Skarżysko)

Krzysztof Powideł (working on a film about Hasag in Skarżysko)

Ewa Kołomańska, historian

Tomasz Domański, historian

Some say that the Hasag forced labour camp at the Skarżysko-Kamienna ammunition plant was much worse than KL Auschwitz. Jews suffered from hunger and illnesses. Despite that they would work for 12-14 hours, without pay and with hardly any food.

“They did not get any special care. On the contrary, the Germans exterminated the Jews... new transports were brought in to replace those who died” –recalls Colonel Henryk Czech. During the war Czech was a teenager who lived in Skarżysko. He was a railway worker. “Those who worked at the railway station knew – there were such small vent-windows in the freight wagons. People looked through the vent holes, they were screaming, asked for food ... Whenever it was possible, they dropped some food into the wagon. The Germans were always on guard, it was difficult to smuggle anything into a train” – he adds.

TNT shredding and heat treatment and then filling the shells were the hardest task. Those who worked at Hasag remember that workers’ skin turned yellow after a few days and they died 2-3 months later.

“That was awful. They used their bare hands to mix the stuff in vats. Sometimes things exploded. People were dying in terrible torments ... I read that a man was tossed into a vat with boiling TNT, just for fun...”

– says Tomasz Domański PhD., a historian. There was the so-called frying pan – a place where the Germans rid off the prisoners corpses with the use of chemicals produced in the factory. To fill in the positions, the Majdanek and other concentration camp prisoners were brought in.

“The whole factory premises were fenced and protected with barbed-wire ... nobody would approach the place. The guards would shoot any trespassers, etc.” – says Colonel Henryk Czech.

From among all the Hasag Polish employees who helped Jews, the “Righteous Among the Nations” medal was presented to two only: Zygmunt Jarosz and Tadeusz Nowak.

The first worked in Hasag as a foreman. he resolved to help and save Jews from the labour brigade he supervised. He took a special care over his 19-year-old colleague Chaim Śliski. Zygmunt Jarosz received support from his family and other people and thus was able to provide food, medications and clothes for Jews. Jarosz was recognised with the medal in 1999. He and the Jews from his brigade survived the war.

Tadeusz Nowak, a member of the Home Army also helped the Jews, he would smuggle food for them. The Germans, having found out the truth decided to execute Nowak in public as a warning to the others who wanted to help Jews. On 21 April 1943 there was an unsuccessful execution by hanging. Tadeusz Nowak was shot in front of workers who were forced to watch him die. His cadaver was hung out for the public to see. On the dead body’s neck there was the label which read: “This Pole gave bread to the Jews.” In 1990 Nowak was honoured with the Righteous Among the Nations title posthumously."