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Summary from Radio Kielce

Episode 17: How much more can you stand? – Stefania and Józef Macugowski, Nowy Korczyn

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<https://polacyratujacyzdow.com.pl/en/how-much-more-can-you-stand-stefania-and-jozef-macugowski-nowy-korczyn/>

Stories about Poles

Stefania Macugowska

Józef Macugowski

The people in the hiding

Szajndla Wajnberg

Lejb Radca

Gitla Radca

Sara Radca

Golda Radca

Miriam Radca

Sara Grynberg - a cousin

Allen Kupfer

Mendel Grynbaum

The story told by

Urszula Bruzda (Stefania and Józef Macugowskis' daughter)

There were about 5,000 Jews living in Nowy Korczyn at the beginning of the war, on 1941, the Germans established a ghetto, the Jewish police and Judenrat there. November 1942 marks the first liquidation of the ghetto and the Jewish population deportation. Several dozen people remained in Nowy Korczyn, including the Judenrat members' and the Jewish police's families. Szajndla Wajnberg contacted the Macugowski family and asked for a hiding place. Lejb Radca, the chairman of the Korczyn Jews Judenrat asked for a hiding place of his three daughters, a wife and himself. Before the war, he and his lived family in the house located in main market square. He and Macugowski were acquaintances, Macugowski would deliver wood and other commodities. Stefania and Józef Macugowski decided to help the Jews.

“When the parents offered help, they did not realize the danger. No one knew it would last so long”– says Urszula Bruzda, the Righteous Among the Nations laureates' daughter. The barn which has lasted out until today was the first hiding – recalls Urszula Bruzda and shows us the entrance to the hiding place. At that time Macugowski and one of those in the hiding dug a extra cubby-hole under the floor of the house. It was approx. 3.5 x 3 meters and 1 meter deep. The hole room was adjacent to the basement, but there was no passage between these two. The floor hatch was the only entrance, it was concealed with the use of a chest on wheels used by Mrs. Macugowska to keep grain and flour. The extra hideout was ready and waiting for the

Radca family. Other people joined in later. By the end of the war, 9 people stayed in the small space under the Macugowski house's floor.

"One extra person – that was insignificant. They were running the risk of death anyhow" – Urszula Bruzda recalls her parent's words once they decided to hide other people.

Those in the hiding did not leave the hideaway for security reasons and fears that they will not be mentally able to return to these conditions and everything would come into the open. It was so tight inside that when one person wanted to turn to the other side at night, everyone had to change position. The food was provided by Mrs. Macugowska. In secret, helped by her husband she prepared flour and baked bread at night. She also emptied the toilet bucket. The people in the den were in crisis caused by difficult conditions. "After some time they demanded to be given poison, because they were unable to bear the situation any longer. Mom told them to carry on. She told them – you can bear it a bit longer. And they lasted until the end" – says Urszula Macugowska. Also in the most difficult times, when a part of the Macugowskis' house was occupied by Germans who organized a contact and communication point there. The traces of cables and German radio stations have remained to this day.

When the war was finally over, those in the hiding left for the United States and Israel. In the 1980s, they re-established contact with the Macugowski family and invited them to visit the United States, where in 1986 there was the awarding ceremony of the Righteous Among the Nations medal. A letter of thanks for the Poles was sent by US President Ronald Reagan."