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**Summary from Radio Kielce**

**Episode 25: I owe my life to them – The Daniszewski family, Starachowice**

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<https://polacyratujacyzydow.com.pl/en/i-owe-my-life-to-them-the-daniszewski-family-starachowice/>

### **Stories about Poles**

Helena Daniszewska

Józef Daniszewski

Irena Pacańska (née Daniszewska)

### **The people who stayed in the hiding**

Tobcia Lustman (later Tova Pagi)

### **The story told by**

Doctor Krzysztof Daniszewski (Helena and Józef's, the couple awarded with the Righteous Among the Nations)

Nathan Lustman – a shop owner, his wife and two daughters lived in Wierzbnik. Helena Daniszewska. used to be one of Lustman's clients. In 1942, before the Jews were deported from Wierzbnik to Treblinka, he asked Daniszewska to hide his younger daughter, the 9-year-old Tova. My grandparents lived in the Bohaterów street, no longer existing today. The local residents used to call this place "Młyny" [the Mills], as there was a dozen or so white plastered houses in the street. The grandparents lived in a one of those shared houses – they had a kitchen and a room with a recess. There was also an attic entrance – says Doctor Krzysztof Daniszewski, Helena and Józef's grandson. The Daniszewski and their three children lived in this flat.

Tobcia Lustman writes in her diary : ""On a cold, early of September evening, Ms. Daniszewska called in our house. I did not want to part with my parents. I cried and wanted to stay. But I knew. My life was to be saved this way. Putting my hand in a strange woman's hand, I parted with my mother and father who I was never to see again. I parted with my sister.""

Tobcia was introduced as a Polish child, a cousin. She called Helena Daniszewska "Auntie". Initially Tobcia was allowed to go and play outdoor with other children in the yard. Then the news spread – several Jewish children in hiding were discovered and killed. The Daniszewski decided to hide the girl in the house. Tobcia was spending long days in the attic. She read a lot of books, mainly Polish literature: Trilogy and Pan Tadeusz. In her diary she recalls this time as particularly difficult. She was longing for the family, there were food supplies problems and the need to stay in hiding place.

Helena Daniszewska maintained regular contact with Tobcia's mother – Estera. A year later Estera decided she wanted to have the daughter back, to be together. Tobcia's mother and her daughters (her father was already dead) were sent to Auschwitz. In 1945, they survived the

winter march, the so-called "death march". All three survived the war and after a short stay in Starachowice and Lodz they all went to Israel.

At the beginning of the 1990s, the Daniszewski family received a letter from Tova Paga. She wanted to re-establish contact with them and visit them in Poland. My grandparents had been dead for a long time. For me and my mother it was a surprise because we did not what had happened. The father of the family was not surprised. He did remember Tova hiding with the grandparents -recalls Doctor Krzysztof Daniszewski. Tova Paga visited to Poland several times a year, she brought young people who, by visiting Poland learned the Holocaust history. Tova showed them her old, wooden house in Wierzbnik.

In 2002, by Tova Paga's endeavour Helena and Józef Daniszewscy and their oldest daughter, Irena Pacańska were regarded Righteous Among the Nations."