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Summary from Radio Kielce

Episode 39: The Only Friend – Marian Krycia, Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski

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<https://polacyratujacyzydow.com.pl/en/the-only-friend-marian-krycia-ostrowiec-swietokrzyski/>

Stories about Poles

Marian Krycia – Righteous Among the Nations

The people who stayed in the hiding

Chanina Szerman (later - Malachi)

Maria Szerman (later - Hinda Malachi)

Bronia Rubinsztajn

Shlomo Rubinsztajn

The story told by

Janina Kańczuga - Marian Krycia's daughter, Marian Krycia was awarded the Righteous Among the Nations title

Jacek Kańczuga - Marian Krycia's son-in-law

Marian Krycia was born in 1920, he, his parents and brothers he lived in Ostrowiec, Siennieńska street. His family maintains that he was associated with the Home Army, he also had Jewish acquaintances living in the neighbourhood. Shlomo Rubinsztajn was among his friends, Chanina Szerman, Rubinsztajn's relative was Marian's school-mate.

When the Ostrowiec ghetto was established, Marian Krycia helped Rubinsztajn and his wife, Bronia. He also aided Chanina. When the Jews' situation began to deteriorate, he made endeavours to organize hiding places and fake Aryan documents for his friends.

In January 1942, Marian Krycia helped Chanina Szerman get out of the ghetto. Szerman went Warsaw suburb's Włochy where he also found a home for Chanin and his wife Maria (Hindy). The couple changed their place of residence several times and had to pay the rent. Marian brought them the necessary money from Ostrowiec-based family. Unfortunately, after some time it turned out that Chanina and Hinda live at the so-called racketeers', blackmailed and robbed of money, clothes and all valuables. They described their difficult experiences and struggle for survival in a diary. They managed to inform Marian about their situation. The Polish friend came to rescue them. Marian got on the train and went to Warsaw. According to the information, he threatened those racketeers, he probably had a gun with him – says Jacek Kańczuga, Marian Krycia's son-in-law. Marian Krycia warned the Polish owner of the apartment – should anything happens to us, he will be punished by the resistance movement, which Mr. Krycia was a member of. From that time on we were no longer troubled. (...) We found that he was truly devoted, he worked selflessly – Hinda and Chanina Malachi wrote in their World War II journal.

In 1943, just before the final liquidation of the ghetto, Marian Krycia also helped Rubinsztajn and his wife. In March, he got Bronia Rubinsztajn out of the ghetto, had Aryan documents

arranged for her and helped her to move to Częstochowa. There she was the only Polish woman who volunteered to work Germany, where she survived until the end of the war. In April 1943, Marian Krycia got Shlomo Rubinsztajn out of the factory labour camp and organized a forest hiding place for him. He provided him food, too.

It continued for some time until the Marian Kycia was probably arrested by the Gestapo and sent to Auschwitz as a punishment for helping the Jews. Then he was sent to the Świętochłowice sub-camp. Marian was one of the few who managed to escape. He was a professional – he was sent to work in a railway commando. It was the in-field work and thus a little easier to escape – says Jacek Kańczuga. He was wanted by an arrest warrant, he was hiding until the end of the war. Only on New Year's Eve 1945/46, on the day of the wedding did my mother get to know his real name. She learned that was not marrying Jan Kowalski but Marian Krycia – says Janina Kańczuga, Marian's daughter.

In the 1970s, Marian Krycia began to seek contact with the friends he had helped during the war. A year before his death he managed to re-establish contact. It was owed to the announcement placed in a Polish-language newspaper in Israel where Rubinsztajns and Szermans had lived since the end of the war.

The renewal of contacts resulted in the Jews' testimony. Marian Krycia was presented the Righteous Among the Nations title in March 1979. However, Marian died a few months later – in October and he probably did not learn about the decoration. Neither did his family. This information was sent to the Marian Krucia's family after 28 years later. It is owed to the Wrocław University of Technology staff who were preparing a publication on the university graduates who had gone through the German extermination camps. Janina Kańczuga was presented her father's awarded at the ceremony in 2018.

My father was a brave person ... there was the camp stigma – he was very nervous. Yet he was a good man. If someone needed help, my father was always the one to count on – says Janina Kańczuga."