

Częstochowianka

The "Częstochowianka" textile factory belonged to a French firm. During the Nazi occupation, the Germans took over this enterprise.

When the Soviet front was nearing Skarżysko, the Hugo Schneider HASAG firm relocated its enterprises to a safer place - this was Częstochowa. The *Częstochowianka* textile factory was transformed into an ammunition plant. The workers were mainly from the evacuated factories in Pionki, Radom and Skarżysko, as well as those left over from HASAG-Pelcery.

Due to the fact that the factory was not yet fully operational, the Jewish workers from the Skarżysko transport, who arrived in September 1944, were temporarily employed in digging defensive trenches in Sulejów.

The work in Sulejów was unbearably hard. Each group, which consisted of twenty-four individuals, had to dig one anti-tank trench in the course of each day. Such a trench measured twenty-four metres in length, six wide and three deep. They slept in rudimentary, filthy barracks, which were a nest of lice, bedbugs, fleas and other insects. One could not even dream of the possibilities of washing oneself or changing one's shirt.

The Jewish workers were woken up before daybreak and, already at five in the morning, were marched to their workplace ten kilometres away. The labourers were overseen by Ukrainian *Werkschutz* and German gendarmes. Once, the labourers, with their clothes on, were forced to cross the river, which was ninety centimetres deep. Meals consisted of 10-12 *deka* [100-120 grams] bread a day and watery soup.

After six weeks of arduous labour, all of them were transferred, physically drained, to the *Częstochowianka* factory. At the start, there was not even a barrack there. Everyone slept in the large factory hall. Later, four barracks were erected. A dispensary and a hospital were also set up.

The Jewish administration consisted of the *Arbeitseinsatz* [labour deployment], headed by Rozenchwajg, and the Jewish police, headed by Bugański, who had great and lengthy police experience under his belt. At first, he, Dawid Bugański, was in the Płaszów death camp near Kraków, later in Skarżysko, then in Sulejów and finally in *Częstochowianka*. He treated his ethnic brethren brutally and had dozens of Jewish lives on his conscience. The Jewish kapos and foremen did not play any role.

The factory produced infantry bullets. There were the following departments there: laundry, infantry, laboratory, toolmaking and tank repairs. Construction work was also carried out to enlarge the factory and a railway line was built. The work was divided into two shifts - day and night.

The leader of the *Werkschutz* and the foremen treated the Jews murderously. One German foreman shot two Jews for no reason. Sanitary conditions and meals were no better than at Sulejów. 1,500 Jews and 200 Poles were employed in the factory. The Polish workers would

bring with them food to sell. Those Jews, who had something to sell or money, obtained food in this manner.

On 15th January 1943 [sic 1945], the evacuation to Buchenwald took place. Among those evacuated was the cruel police commander, Dawid Bugański. The inmates knew his “good deeds” well, starting from Płaszów, Skarżysko and Sulejów and ending in *Częstochowianka*. So they arranged a self-judgement against him and sentenced him to death - a sentence which they immediately carried out.