

Schindler's List

Oskar Schindler - Schindler's Factory

Oskar Schindler, a Sudeten German and member of the Nazi Party, came to Cracow in 1939 showing interest in the local Enamel Factory. Finally Oskar Schindler as an opportunistic businessman succeeded in buying the Cracow Enamel Factory thanks to Jewish capital. He renamed it as German Enamel Factory producing enamelware for the war. So Schindler's Factory became a flourishing company. Schindler was responsible for the factory representation using his good contacts in the Nazi system. His Jewish accountant Itzhak Stern had the task to recruit Jewish slave labours from the nearby Cracow ghetto, often choosing workers not fit for industrial production.

Schindler's Jews - Schindler's List

In 1943 the Cracow Ghetto was liquidated and the surviving Jews were imprisoned in the Cracow-Plaszow Concentration Camp. At that time Oskar Schindler met the Cracow-Plaszow commandant Amon Göth and saw him arbitrarily torturing and murdering prisoners. In 1944, as the front drew nearer to Cracow, Oskar Schindler got the permission to move his Jewish workers to Brünnlitz in today's Czech Republic where he built up an ammunition factory. After World War II Schindler lived of the financial support his saved Jews gave him. He died in 1974 and was buried at the Catholic cemetery in Jerusalem.

Schindler's Factory today

At the Cracow Schindler's Factory a commemorative plaque hangs with the famous Talmud slogan: "Whoever saves one life, saves the entire world". One part of the Factory is now used by private firms and another part has been transformed into a museum. At the moment there is a big discussion how to use the area around Schindler's Factory: Some people want to establish a centre of modern art, others - fearing controversy - prefer a mere memorial site with documentation centre. But no final decision has yet been taken.