

FILM TAPE Nr N-0755 microfilmed on September 14, 2000 by Jastrzębski Wojciech	TESTIMONIES/ACCOUNTS of Jews – Holocaust survivors	ZIH (Jewish Historical Institute) Archives Catalogue number 301/3507
	Written down on February 24, 1948 Celina Sandler (concerns Elza Żelichowska) original handwritten text, 3 pages of different format, in Polish language + 2 page typewritten copy	

Paris, February 24, 1948

To
 Central Jewish Historical Committee
 in Łódź

I hereby inform the Central Jewish Historical Committee that I met citizen Elza Żelichowska in the Warsaw Ghetto, where she arrived with three small children, illegally crossing the border from Łódź, to join her Jewish husband and share with him and his fellow-believers their difficult fate. She was indeed going through an ordeal doing manual jobs much beyond her physical capacity in order to feed her family. Her husband who suffered from a heart condition could not work to earn a living. Although suffering great hardship herself, she shared every morsel of food with those even poorer. The beggars never left her doorstep without receiving some help, she used to set a good example to her neighbours - insensitive to misfortunes of poor folk. While leaving the Ghetto with her three small children she also took along a three year old sick son of her neighbours' (a boy of Semitic looks). Her husband did not want to leave the Ghetto, but promised to do it as soon as his life would be threatened. A heart attack put an end to his life, and she learned about it from his closest friend who, together with his wife, lived in hiding at Żelichowska's for over a year. Besides the married couple and a child mentioned above, for whom she became a substitute mother, she provided hiding for two women, one of them not only had 'improper looks' but also did not speak Polish. I don't remember the couple's surname (first names Józef and Pola), they believed the propaganda spread, nb, by Guzik and left, taking a child with them, through "Hotel

Krak'.²

Zelichowska's entreaties as well as my efforts to persuade them not to go – not to believe gestapo provocation - did not work. Tearful Zelichowska saw her friends off to the hotel. On my recommendation she selflessly gave shelter to Szaja Pfeffer and an orphan boy Juleczek Goldman, who is in Paris now. Pfeffer and a Jewish- German woman, both of whom she was helping also after the war, did not prove to be worth her sacrifice; they both went away promising wonders and then did not keep their word. She saved those people's lives risking not only her own but also that of her children's. I, myself was bought out by her from the blackmailers for the sum of 8 000 zloties which at that time constituted all of her savings. Unfortunately I was not in a position to repay this money, the fact Zelichowska was well aware of. I paid her back with all my heart's love and good advice and she was grateful for it. In 1946 and 1947, exposing herself to falling into hostile relations with her neighbours, she let into her flat some Jews who could hardly speak any Polish, but they also only took advantage of her goodness. During German occupation, being unable to take into her care all the needy ones, she used to find shelter for them with her friends who had Jewish husbands, but they demanded to be paid well for that. Zelichowska never refused shelter to those recommended by me. She is a silent heroine, a person who devoted all her possessions, her children's and her own health to the cause of helping tortured Jews, as she often used to tell me, shedding tears. I could have written volumes about citizen Zelichowska's noble, dedicated attitude towards Jews, both in the Ghetto and on the 'Aryan' side. She fully deserves to be offered help by the Jewish institutions, probably more than anyone else, all the more as she is ill and her child is threatened with lung disease. All this is my honest confession coming from the very depth of my heart.

Celina Sandler
the niece of late Nakum Sokołow³

Notes

2. The typed transcript of the letter includes a note in brackets at this point saying that it's probably a mistake, that it should be Hotel Polski (vide Hotel Polski affair).

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hotel_Polski

3. Nakum Sokołow (1859-1936) was a famous Zionist leader, translator and writer, a pioneer of Hebrew journalism.