



Schindler, Oskar

(1908--1974), Czech businessman who protected Jews during the Holocaust. Schindler was designated as Righteous among the Nations by Yad Vashem, and made famous by Steven Spielberg's award-winning film, *Schindler's List*.

Oskar Schindler was born in Sudetenland, Czechoslovakia. After Germany invaded Poland in 1939, Schindler went to Cracow to take over two enamelware factories which had previously been owned by Jews. Both were successful ventures, and he operated one as an agent for the German occupiers. Schindler later opened a third factory outside Cracow, in which he employed mainly Jews, saving them from deportation.

The Cracow Ghetto was liquidated in early 1943 - many of its Jews were sent to the Plaszow labor camp nearby. Schindler, greatly affected by the Jews' plight, used his good connections with important German officials in the Armaments Administration to establish a branch of the Plaszow camp inside his factory compound. 900 Jewish workers, some unfit for hard labor, were employed in the factory. They were thus rescued from the conditions at Plaszow.

By October 1944, Schindler's factory was no longer in use, and the Russian army was advancing towards Poland. Schindler acquired permission to move his factory to Sudetenland and reestablish it as an armaments production company. Once again, Schindler used his contacts to arrange to take his Jewish workers with him. He successfully transferred 700--800 men from the concentration camp at Gross-Rosen and about 300 women from Auschwitz. The names of these workers were recorded on a list, earning the name "Schindler's List."

Schindler's Jews were treated in the most humane way possible. He and his wife, Emilie, provided them with food and medical care. Those Jews who died were buried in proper Jewish funerals. Schindler consistently used his charming personality and good connections to befriend and extract favors



from important SS officials in Poland (they even got him out of jail several times when the Gestapo accused him of corruption).

In all, Schindler saved some 1,100 Jews from almost certain death. He is buried in a Christian cemetery in Jerusalem.