

Anna Hydrakova With Friends



This photo of me was taken in Prague in 2003 when I was celebrating my birthday with my two friends whom I have known for a long time.

Before November 1989 I distributed Samizdat publications , for which I also wrote, but mostly we listened to Radio Free Europe . I was enthusiastic about the Velvet Revolution.

I went on demonstrations even beforehand, and was once showered by a water cannon. We weren't at the demonstration on 17th November though, because we were moving house on 1st December.

I was packing and making preparations, so it was a bit of a hectic time. After the revolution, my personal life changed in that I got divorced and remained single.

Also, I had very bleak prospects as to how I would manage to pay the rent on my low pension. Things later improved thanks to various compensation funds and humanitarian contributions.

After the divorce I started to work again, collecting the testimonies of Holocaust survivors for the Jewish Museum.

I am an active member of the Terezin Initiative of which I have become third deputy chair. After the revolution I also worked at the Institute for Contemporary History where I contributed to the publication of three works, one of which was on eminent people in Terezin.

I also took part in the preparations for a new exhibition on the Terezin ghetto and for a new exhibition to complement the Czech exhibition in Auschwitz.

At the moment, I am preparing for publication the Terezin 'Tagesbefehle' [Daily Orders]. I feel I owe a debt of gratitude to those who didn't survive and that I'm paying this off by doing something in this field.