

Romana Holder



This is me in 2000. I needed a photo for my passport to go on a trip to Bavaria organized by some Jewish organization. The picture was taken at a photographic studio in Warsaw.

In the house where I live now I don't know any other Jewish families, it's all Catholics around me. Who knows what they think about me. I don't go to all those events at TSKZ. It used to be that I was able to go, but I only went twice. They meet at a bad time, when I'm having dinner at home. Now there is no way I could go [because of having a broken arm]. Too bad.

We don't observe any Jewish traditions in our home, except my son buys matzah in this store at Twarda [the Synagogue and Jewish Theater are also on that street]. I don't eat it, because it's not what matzah used to be. But my son eats it for dessert after supper.

For me, it never mattered one bit what my friends' background was. I had friends among both Jews and Poles. After the war I helped Zaba-my husband had connections, so he arranged for an apartment in Warsaw and a job at the hospital for Zaba's daughter. After Zaba died, in 1973, her husband wanted me to help him get into the veterans' union. How could I? I didn't have any connections there. So I told him there was this tree campaign going on. And he got the title of 'Righteous Among the Nations.' He accepted it in his and Zaba's name. He died last year.

Everything bad that I could have experienced I already did. I don't know if anything changed for the better in my life after 1989. When I hear which parties are winning [currently the left is in power, but in the upcoming parliamentary and presidential elections in fall 2005, both right-wing parties and right-wing individual politicians are likely to win]-what is left to believe in? I know we shouldn't

have stayed here. I've known that for a long time.

I keep on wondering why I didn't think of going abroad right after the war. In 1956 when everybody was leaving I asked my husband 'Maybe we should go, too?' But he said 'Go if you want, I'm staying.' So what was I to do? Take my son and leave? I was uneducated, untrained, I didn't have anywhere to work, I didn't know what to do. So I stayed, like an idiot. Every little anti-Semitic gesture or remark drives me up the wall. At moments like that I can't forgive myself for having stayed here. It's no good to live a lie.