

Jozef Seweryn With War Veterans



This is me with my friends. I don't remember their names. We came to Frankfurt (Germany) on the ceremony for the war veterans, who were witnesses at the trials of war criminals. The photo was taken in Frankfurt in the 1990s.

I first went to a trial of war criminals as a witness in 1962. I also went in 1963, 1964 and later as well. I attended over a dozen trials. Four times in Berlin, and also in Hanover, Hamburg, Wuppertal and Frankfurt, several times. I was a good witness, because I had had personal contacts with many SS men. I had cut their hair, I had shaved them, so I remembered their faces well and I was able to recognize them. Among other trials, I attended the trial of Artur Breitwieser, the one who came from Lvov and who I served with in the army before the war, and whom I later met in Auschwitz - he was an SS man and I an inmate.

Today, the way I see it, Jewry isn't as Jewish as before the war. It's enough to go to a cemetery and compare the old section with the new one. The old tombstones - matzevas, and today? The same tombstones as in a Catholic cemetery. Besides, nowadays Jews are buried in coffins, and before the war it was a shroud and a bag of sand under the head; it was different, because they were buried the Jewish way back then.

And I'm old and sick now. My second wife, Henia, whom I married in 1981, is also a Catholic. There was no Jewish world in Poland, there were no Jews. We live together in Warsaw. In 2001 I was appointed an officer by the president of the Republic of Poland, as a war veteran. I'm a veteran, a group one war invalid and a former prisoner of Auschwitz. I have identity cards and documents to prove that. I received some reparations from the Germans, but it wasn't much. Renovating my apartment cost me more than what I got from them.