

Romana Holder In The 1940s, After The War



This is me in the late 1940s. This photo must have been taken in Warsaw. I needed it for a pass to the office where my husband worked, at the Ministry of National Defense.

In Lublin I worked in the office of General Grosz. Mrs. Zabłudowska was the head of that office and I was her helper. I wrote up orders on the typewriter. And once the order was to transfer somewhere a Col. Henryk Holder, son of Michal. Could it be the husband of my friend from before the war, Lidka from Kolomyia? I wrote to him without thinking much of the future, only because he was someone who knew me, remembered me... He came to visit, which was very kind of him. I told him all about myself and asked about his wife. Both she and his entire family died. So later I thought, 'What do I care which one it is?' Since I knew him from Lidka's stories and believed he was a decent man, we got together.

In Katowice, in December 1945, we got married. I remember I had nothing to serve our two witnesses. I borrowed potatoes from the neighbors, we bought some frankfurters and that was our wedding feast.

When we met he was in the First Army, in the prosecutor's office. I didn't even know what a prosecutor is. Had I known, maybe I wouldn't have decided to be with him... And he was the prosecutor for a long time. Luckily, in 1950 they fired him, most likely because of his Jewish background, and hired a Pole in his place. He was let go before all those trials, but in his time there must have been trials, too. I don't know; he never told me and I never asked.

After the wedding we lived in Katowice. My husband was then transferred to Warsaw. I followed him in a short time, for I wasn't my own from then until the end of his life. We got an apartment which belonged to the Army: three beautiful rooms, a bathroom with a window, a maid's room. I had my first child Piotr in 1948, but he died within 12 hours. In the army hospital, in Warsaw, he was taken to the other world. In 1949 my second son, Jerzy, was born, so we hovered over him. I even went to Wroclaw [to an expert in high-risk pregnancies] to give birth to him. Then we came back to Warsaw. There was a very good nanny and a maid. So I finally went out to work. In 1954 I went on a year-long drafting course. I completed it, I even have the certificate, but I can draft just about as well as I can sew. So obviously I didn't work in that line, but as a secretary in an office of this state enterprise, Construction of Housing for Workers, BOR. First I was in the department of planning, but I just couldn't get it. Even today if they ask me to plan something, you can guess what it's going to look like. We had a manager who couldn't even sign his name, illiterate. So I said, 'I don't want anything to do with that kind of education.' Later I was the secretary of the main Director. I was bored witless, I read books, because he went to conferences every day and there was nothing for me to do. I didn't work there long, a year maybe. After that, I don't think I worked anywhere else.

When my husband was fired in 1950, he was a colonel. He moved to Mr. Bierut's legal office. I can't remember if he worked there until Bierut's death [1956], but afterwards he became the manager of the Office of the State Council.