

My Granddaughter Ewa



This is the photo of my granddaughter Ewa.

It seems to me I told my daughter that I was Jewish only after my divorce with her father.

And she became interested in those things. Kasia went to the head of the Jewish Community and said her mother lived in Gdynia, on Warszawska.

He told her to tell her mother to come. I didn't go for a long time, didn't want to hear about that. I was afraid, afraid to come out, the fear's still in me. My children aren't afraid but I am.

My daughter feels Jewish. She has two children.

My grandson, when in the third year of his exclusive high school here, came once to me and said, 'Grandma, I have this assignment, I'm to draw my genealogical tree and list relatives who suffered during the war and where.'

And he knew I was Jewish. I told him, 'Mateusz, my boy, I'm asking you, please, don't put me there.'

What for? You may have problems, perhaps there are anti-Semites at school.'

'I'm not ashamed of it and I'll put it there.' So my children aren't afraid and I am. All the time.

This fear is so strongly embedded in me that I probably won't get rid of it till the end of my life.

I've never been to Israel. I'm afraid my heart won't bear it, I'm afraid of the climate.

My granddaughter's been there many times. The first time she went was in reward for helping Rabbi Schudrich, Poland's Chief Rabbi, with the March of the Living, the annual march of Jewish and non-Jewish youth from the gate of the Auschwitz camp to the crematoria at Birkenau, she worked as a voluntary chaperone for those groups.