

Janina Duda In 2003



This is me in my apartment in Warsaw, in 2003. It's in Mokotow which is an old and quiet Warsaw neighborhood. I have lived here for many years, now I don't remember the date I moved in. It could be around 40 years now. Now I'm alone, my husband died in 1986. I had an exceptional husband, Teodor, who was completely free from any kind of nationalism. In 1968 he suggested to me - let's leave. I told him, 'No, my place is here.' And in 1968, in the office, in the company where I was working, in international commerce, one of the men had just returned from the Far East when the Israeli war was going on and he talked about what was happening there. They threw him out of the Polish United Workers' Party and they told me, 'You have to repeat what he said.' I really didn't remember and, even if I did, I wouldn't have said it. I hate informers, although I understand that sometimes you need to use them, but not in this case. I voted against his expulsion from the party. So I was reprimanded. It was only a reprimand, because I had been a partisan and the chief of my

district was Korczynski, so they were scared to do anything more. But they later asked me in the district party headquarters if I felt I had been harmed. So I just told them one thing, 'You know what, I worked in the ministry of security, I understand they have to use informers there, but you in the party structures?' That really is what I told them. So I didn't leave and wasn't planning on leaving. Just like that. I don't have much contact with the Jewish community in Warsaw. There were some disagreements and other issues there in the meantime; also they are more into Yiddish and I have distanced myself from that, I can't go back and throw away decades of my life. I say this, because there were different kinds of Jewish people. Traditional Jews were a whole different world for me. I couldn't understand that world. Because I was in circles where you read Russian and Polish literature; my generation went to Polish schools, gymnasia. There were no lectures, no study of Jewish religion, culture or tradition. Did I want to break away from Jewishness? No. When I came to the partisan unit, I gave them my name, last name, everything. But my current name, the one I have since 1939, is mine, because I chose it. And this is how it stayed my entire life. I don't have anything more to say about Jewishness.