

One Of Herta Coufalova's Pictures From Israel



This picture was taken in 2004 in Jaffa, a suburb of Tel Aviv. I'm not in the photo. I was happy when the state of Israel was created in 1948 and was sad that I couldn't go there. People went there out of idealism. They went to work in the fields and there was always a shomer - a guard with a gun - with them. They lived in primitive houses; parents didn't sleep with their children, who lived in special homes. These days they live relatively well. People in kibbutzim don't want to work. Nowadays every kibbutz has affiliated production, because otherwise they wouldn't be able to support themselves. This is partly due to a serious lack of water. The wars and conflicts in Israel always saddened me. I had relatives and friends there. Now there are already three generations of Glasners there. I've been to Israel four times, each time I stayed for fourteen days. The first time I went was in the year 1956. I came to a town where they were opening the Terezin Memorial. Five of us from Brno had been invited. It was very difficult for me to get permission to travel. Permits were given out on Hradcanske Namesti [Hradcany Square, in Prague]. I had to go there three times. The civil servants acted like the Gestapo towards us. The man who gave out the permits yelled at everyone. When my turn came, before he could open his mouth to say anything, I piped up first: 'Look here, now tell me whether you do or don't have that permit, but you're not going to yell at me, I'm not being interrogated by the Gestapo here.' He just looked at me and threw me the permit. The flight was Prague - Sofia - Athens. From there we traveled on by boat, stopping at Cyprus and Crete. The memorial opening was on the 22nd and I didn't manage to fly out until the 22nd. I was there for two weeks, and liked it very much. It was beautiful, because in those days there weren't a lot of people going there yet. And when I returned there this year, I didn't even have time to stop and think a bit, because I was carried along by the crowd. I was there again in the year 1985 - 1986 and in 1989.