

Halina Birencwajg



This is a picture of me, Halina Leszczynska, nee Birencwajg. I gave this picture to my friend, Zenia Marder (on the back there's still a dedication for her), but I can't remember how it came back to me.

After the war, my family first lived in Pieszyce. Later I moved to Dzierzoniow, to a dormitory. And I have to say that the years I spent in the dormitory in Dzierzoniow and later in Wroclaw were the best years of my life. I am still in touch with all the friends from that period. When I went to Israel, there was an entire reunion there! Most of them didn't have families. There weren't many who, like

me, had both parents. They were mostly orphans, from the ghetto, from the partisan units, or from Russia. Some had been in hiding. We never asked about anyone how he had survived the war. Why? I don't know, everyone was happy to be there and that was it.

I went to that dormitory and I enrolled in a gymnasium. I went to the Sniadeckich gymnasium. I had problems with Polish, because I hadn't been studying it. But I tutored my classmates in math, because the standard in the Russian school had been much higher than in Poland at that time. There were several Jewish girls in the class and we were all good students. But we were all a bit older than the other children. We belonged to the ZWM, Union of Youth Fighters, although there were many Zionist organizations there, and Bund. There were always discussions in the dorm at night, because everyone belonged to some organization. Now we've all settled down, but at that time we were all very idealistic.

You could learn to be a radio technician at that school, there was a Dior factory, a radio factory, in Dzierzoniow, so they'd give you work. You could be a radio technician, a locksmith, learn some sewing, unstitching, as we called it, dressmaking courses for girls. Everyone spoke Jewish, Russian, Polish. There were dances organized every night. We had several German records and we kept playing them on the record player over and over.