Tomasz Miedzinski With Friends

This is me with my friends in Wroclaw at the end of the 1940s. I was a member of the ZWM - the Fighting Youth Union, and I was made an instructor with the municipal board. And, if you please, I - a Jew - was elected chairman of a branch of the ZWM numbering over 180 members. In the summer of 1947 I went to Wroclaw and lived in the Korczak Memorial Boarding House at 30 Krasinskiego Street. There were about 120-125 of us there. Most of us were Jewish orphans. The young people who lived in that house attended Polish schools, the ORT, or the artisan school run by the Jewish Committee. I was working, a little in a wagon factory and a little helping to rebuild the city. And I was studying. We did the whole of the grammar school program in one year and the whole of the high school program in the second year. After two years' study, in 1948, I sat my school-leaving exam. And of course I was also active in the community. I was appointed to the committee organizing the Uniting Congress of Youth Organizations in Poland. And in 1948, on 22 July, in the Slask cinema auditorium, the Uniting Congress of Youth Organizations was held, and the Polish Youth Union was created. On Saturdays and Sundays we organized 'Sobotniki': these were voluntary work programs; we were rebuilding important buildings in Wroclaw, including the main building of Wroclaw University, the Polytechnic on Kosciuszkowski Bank, part of the wagon factory, and other public facilities in Wroclaw. In 1948 I was offered a move to Warsaw, to a school for officers involved in training and political affairs. I graduated from that school in 1949. It was an accelerated, six-month course; at the time they were looking for people of a similar class who had a future as officers. On graduation we received the rank of ensign and I was sent to work on the Training Board at the Ministry of National Defense. I organized educational courses for young recruits, chiefly literacy courses. I went on several further training and pedagogical courses myself.