

Michal Nadel's Wife Stanislawka With Her Friends From Military Hospital In Cracow



This is the photo of my wife Stanislawka with her friends. The photo was taken in 1945 or 1946 in military hospital in Cracow where we met. I don't know who could take it.

In 1946 from Cracow they sent me to a military health resort in Kudowa Zdroj. From Kudowa they moved me to a hospital in Busko Zdroj, ca. 80 km north of Cracow. In Busko, thanks to baths and treatments, I started walking without a cane. I couldn't believe it myself. I returned to Cracow and I had no cane on me anymore. Then my acquaintance with my future wife began. I met her in the hospital. She took part in the Warsaw Uprising, she was from Warsaw. Her name was Stanislawka Auerbach or Ostojka, but in the documents her last name was Kulda. Kulda was her last name from the occupation. She had several names, Kulda, Ostojka, various ones.

Stanislawka was her real name. She was 2 years younger than me. She came from Warsaw. She was a daughter of a Jewish doctor. She was born in 1924, in a particularly assimilated family. She couldn't even speak Yiddish. She took her high school exams before the war. They wanted to send her to a diplomatic school - she was very bright - but, of course, that was out of the question since the war broke out. Right after creating the Warsaw ghetto she crossed over to the Aryan side. When the Germans moved them to the ghetto, her parents moved her to their relatives. I met those people as well. They lived in Zoliborz, a Polish family of teachers. The husband, as an officer, was murdered in Katyn. And the wife and the son lived there in teachers' housing. And my wife stayed there. Her family remained in the ghetto. None of them survived.

She lived in various places on the Aryan side. She worked as a help, as a nanny. She was in AK. First in the Combat Association. That teacher had a 3-bedroom apartment. They were poor. She rented one bedroom to some Ania. And it turned out that she belonged to the staff of People's Guard. Things were getting complicated, because Stacha [short for Stanislawka] was carried messages in AK and also cooperated with people in AL. She wasn't a member, but was just helping them. She hid weapons in the basement, brought them some newspapers. In this apartment there

was also Marian Spychalski, a communist activist in the Polish People's Republic, and Celina, his assistant. And Stacha used to help them. She hid guns and passed information AK obtained from abroad through their channels. Her code name was Slawka. She received the Cross of the Valorous from Spychalski for that period and later another Cross of the Valorous - Polish military decoration distinction for the period of the uprising. She took part in the uprising normally, in AK. She was severely wounded and ended up in field hospitals. These are such stories, good for a movie, and nobody would believe it happened in real life.

She was most afraid AK would consider her a spy. But she did it all in a good faith. After the war she got distinctions from both sides. But she was afraid to live in Warsaw. She was afraid they would accuse her. Those from AL, when they found out she was active in AK, were shocked. She didn't want to risk it and didn't want to go back to Warsaw. During the uprising she was wounded - her entire leg was shattered, gangrene started. Friends from AK moved her to a hospital in Cracow, Germans allowed for moving badly wounded to Cracow.

In the Cracow hospital there were several patients Jewish soldiers. It was a very interesting group, second in command was captain Barabasz. They were somewhat cured then. When in Israel there was the liberation war in 1948 they decided to leave the hospital and go to Israel. I wanted to go with them. I wasn't married with Stacha then, she was just my girlfriend. I went to say goodbye to her. We went to a park in the morning. I told her that right now it would be difficult for me to leave. It was a beautiful summer day. We sat on the bench, there was nobody around. We said goodbye and I left.

When I walked a few meters away, I wanted to look at her one more time. I turned around and went back to a spot from which I could see her. Stacha was sitting and crying. It was for me... I was really touched by that. I was probably worried she might commit suicide. Alone, on crutches - she walked on crutches then. I knew she had been counting on me, hoping for a steady relationship. I looked for a bit more and went away. I didn't go back to her. I went to Cracow and said that I can't go with them. Maybe some other time, but now it's impossible and I went back to my girlfriend. We got married, in a military marriage office, still in the hospital, but I could already walk then. We slept in a hotel that night. Friends, witnesses, hired a horse carriage for us.

Later we had to become independent. They offered me a job either at the Okęcie airport or in Pruszków in the army headquarters, but my wife was afraid of going back to Warsaw. She had trauma. Trauma about those ruins, because she lost all her friends there. It turned out there was an air base near Łódź. So I agreed to that.

My wife worked in companies as a cashier. She was also a disabled war veteran. We had a child then already - our son was born in 1947, in May. His name is Aleksander. After my father. Slawek, my second son, was born in 1954, on 22nd July. He finished studies in Łódź, Department of Medicine. Now he is a doctor in Łagiewniki [district in Łódź].

Stacha died on 18th April 2002. She had surgery. That leg, all the time. Wounds kept opening... Recently she was sick, we don't really know with what, she probably had a stomach tumor. She was suffering for 2 years. She's buried at the Jewish cemetery. I suspected there would be no life for me. 56 or 57 years we were together, married. I can't find myself until this day. I was sick, I went to hospital twice, but the younger son visits me, and so it slowly goes...