

Henryk Prajs' False Birth Certificate



This is my false birth certificate, which I got from a priest when I ran away from the labor camp in Olszewo. From that time to the end of war my name was Feliks Zoladek, born on 24th October 1915 in Regonie. This paper saved my life.

After my escape, somehow I managed to get through to Gora Kalwaria. I went to my neighbor, Mrs. Wasilewska. She immediately started to plan what to do. We went to Osijek together, to a parish priest, Kuropek was his name I think. He issued a birth certificate for me. Later I got myself a kenkarta, in the name Feliks Zoladek. You had to do it with the help of friends and friends of friends. Because the priest gave me the certificate, but not the kenkarta, naturally. A friend took the certificate, went to one of those doing funny business, that is, people who fabricated false IDs, and had them make me a kenkarta, that's how it was done. It wasn't legal.

I lived in the country, staying with different farmers and tailoring for them. One told some other he knew a tailor, and so I kept going from one person to another. Some of them knew I was a Jew, they figured it out, but well, I did survive. I stayed in one village, returned to another, kept in hiding for some time, had to run away on another occasion, one was always looking for a safe house.

I've been exceptionally lucky. They told me: 'Heniek, you don't look like a Jew at all.' I also spoke correct Polish, more or less, I mean I had the right accent, because as for the grammar a peasant wouldn't notice. I could quite safely assume I wouldn't be recognized by anyone. Plus I was a soldier, I was brave. That's why I took risks, I probably wouldn't otherwise, just like many others. You can't imagine, you could be killed any time, and not just you, but also the person harboring you.