

Jakub Bromberg Taking Jews From Argentine Round Jewish Lodz



This is me, Jakub Bromberg, taking Jews from Argentine round the Jewish Lodz. The photo was taken in Lodz in 2000. I sometimes do such sightseeing with the Jewish tourists who come to Lodz and want to see the town of their ancestors.

My life was my schooling. I toughened in the army and in the mines. I wear a star of David on the lapel, on purpose. Everybody knows me. At the Grand Hotel and at other hotels. They have respect for me. When they want to find out where some street used to be, they call me. Nobody offends me and if there is such a person, I give him a lesson, so he won't think I'm a 'jojne karabin' that shoots onions from a crooked barrel.

My life is very bad now. I'm alone. Drugs are expensive, everything is expensive. They won't admit you to hospital. The doctor doesn't care about the patient. You have to bribe him, and where am I to get the money? I live off my pension. I sometimes show tourists around: when someone comes, I show them around. Some want to see the ghetto, because it has changed, some the statue of Moses on Wolborska Street. And I also have the pleasure of looking for members of different families. I reunite families. I search to find out if someone is still alive somewhere. People pass on such knowledge. I do too. I look for someone through someone else, because perhaps someone knows something. I have reunited several families. I once met a professor, who said that his mother had come here. He didn't know anything about his sister, only that she had got lost. 'Your sister is alive, she's a professor in New Zealand.' 'What does she look like?' I said: 'Stocky built, of medium height.' 'How old?' 'Approximately 60.' He started crying on the street. 'That's my sister', 'I thought she died in Auschwitz', 'No, she's alive.' And I gave him her address.

There was a time when I wanted to emigrate, like others. That was when they they were harassing me, when they fired me from work in 1968. They were distributing Jewish apartments then. Giving

them to repatriates from Russia. 'Zabuzanie' [inhabitants of the eastern bank of the River Bug, Polish], they sent in those from the other side of the Bug. One of them came to me as well. He was allotted my apartment, so I was supposed to move out. I was outraged, because I had painted the floors, the walls, everything was elegant. I didn't know I'd have to leave. So they sent for me from Warsaw, took away my passport, gave me two months to run away and a travel card. I thought to myself: 'I'm a Polish citizen, I won't sign anything, I won't give up what's mine. Perhaps I'll leave some day, but when I want to do so.' So I told this blockhead who came here to take over my apartment that the toilet is downstairs and that he could live there. And I stayed. That's fate. Now I don't move anywhere. At my age I'm barely alive. I don't know if I'll come back from hospital. Not to mention traveling. Anyway, I deeply believe in destiny. It must have been my destiny. 'Where you head is to lie, there your legs want to go.'