

Ludwik Hoffman



On this photo, you can see what I looked like in 1946, when I was living in Walbrzych.

When the war was over I settled in Walbrzych and registered with the Jewish committee. After I found my sister and my two cousins, I went first to Cracow, where Cousin Matys lived, and then to visit my sister who lived in Katowice. We all decided to return here and set up a business together with some friends.

As far as my professional life is concerned, I initially operated, with a partner, a textile trading business. Then, after 1950 when they started nationalizing private businesses, I had to start working for public-sector companies. And so until 1990, when I finally retired, I worked for various state-owned domestic trade enterprises. Due to the fact that during my career I never joined the communist party, I never felt the impact of the various political changes on my skin.

There were between 15,000-20,000 Jews in Walbrzych after the war. Today, the Walbrzych branch of the Social and Cultural Association of Jews in Poland (TSKZ) has a mere 40 members. The only moment when I experienced discrimination because of my Jewish descent occurred when Solidarity came. My former immediate superior was fired and the new one believed that, because I was drawing benefits as a war veteran, I could be sent into early retirement. He made efforts to fire me, arguing that I was blocking promotion opportunities for younger employees. But the other executives, who knew about my longtime professional experience in commerce, decided I could stay as long as I wanted. That's why, in 1989, at the age of 67, I decided I no longer needed to work and, due to the fact that I'd receive quite a hefty pension, I decided to leave.