

Michal Warzager With His Friends From Work



This photo was taken when I was working in ELPO factory in Legnica. This was a textile factory. I worked there as a locksmith, but one year I was there in a fire brigade. Those people are my fellows from the fire brigade, one of them was a an anti-Semite as I remember. I don't remember his name neither the ones of the others on the photo.

When we arrived in Legnica, we didn't know anything here. People simply moved into apartments, whatever they could find. They were empty apartments left by the Germans who had been resettled. We moved into an apartment on Grodzka Street, along with a friend - there were four apartments in one building. He went to work at the steelworks, and I found work with the Russians, in a tank factory. It was only called a tank factory - there wasn't a tank in sight, though, all we did was repair the engines. I worked there until they closed down the factory and left. I remember they didn't pay well at all, and the work was hard. After that I found a job at Elpo - the Legnica Clothing Factory. They welcomed me with open arms. I worked there as a locksmith for 22 years, right up until I retired.

Right after the war Legnica was almost a Jewish town. I looked around the marketplace, or walking down the streets - Jews everywhere. I knew a lot of people who were traders then. They kept telling me to stop working and become a trader, but I didn't have a knack for it. They did business with the Russians - they'd buy watches or gold, and then sell the stuff for a profit. But I didn't like hanging around and haggling with them. The police could run you in for that in those days, and I'd got my honorable discharge from the army and didn't want to ruin my reputation. Everything then seemed so temporary - we couldn't be sure we wouldn't have to take off, or that the Germans wouldn't come back to Legnica. We'd have our dinners at the Repatriation Bureau - there was a cafeteria there. We didn't save money. We lived for the moment.

Over the years in Legnica sometimes I have run into some anti-Semitism. There was a fireman where I worked - I even worked with him for a year. He'd watch me doing something and ask why I

was doing it Jewish-style. It was a sort of joke, but with a sting. Normally he was as nice as could be, but sometimes he'd burst out with something like that without meaning to. But then, he's dead now, and one mustn't speak ill of the dead.