

Gustawa Birencwajg On Holidays



This is my mother, Gustawa Birencwajg, on holiday in Cieplice, in Poland. This photo was taken in the 1940s.

After the war my uncle, Chaim Poltorak, organized us an apartment. It was on Bieruta Street. A lot of apartments there were taken up by people from Lodz. One had a luxurious house, one had two rooms with a kitchen and this uncle showed us a room with a kitchen, but there was water there, there was a toilet. Everything there had been lost due to 'szaber' . The mattresses were torn, everything. My mom took a broom and started cleaning up a bit, sweeping. Then my father came and asked her: 'What are you doing here?' She said: 'Chaim gave us this apartment, so I'm cleaning up a bit.' 'Leave everything right this minute and get out.' 'Why?' 'Because it's not yours. Don't

touch anything and leave.' She said: 'You know what, I won't leave. I won't leave this place.' Because we had two beds, there was a cot as well, there were no owners, there wasn't much more, but you could live there. And finally he knew he couldn't fight her any longer, so he gave up.

And that's where we settled. There were children in the city and they started organizing a nursery. Because my mom had worked at a nursery in Russia, they took her as the director, to organize that nursery, because nobody knew how to go about it. Nurseries did not exist before the war. She organized it, there was a doctor there who was a Jew, and she took in young children, under three years of age, she organized the staff and it was all very good. This was in Piotrolesie. Near Dzierzoniow. She worked there for some two or three years, I don't remember exactly. This orphanage for Jewish children was next to the nursery, they picked these children up in the forests. They were alone. The director asked her to transfer to that orphanage, as the hostess. His name was Kozlowski. He later died in Israel. Anyway, she transferred there and worked as hostess. And my father was working in a boiler-room in a factory.