

Danuta Mniewska On The Film Set



This is me on the film set of "The Two Brigades" in Lodz in 1950. I played one of the roles. I do not remember the names of the men sitting with me. My husband had a house in Czestochowa that he inherited after his parents, on Druga Aleja. There we lived in three rooms with my sister. My sister and I got very close when we realized that our whole family was dead. We started working right away at a gynecological hospital on Swietej Barbary Street near Jasna Gora. However, I wanted to study. I enrolled for a high-school course for adults, I was already twenty-something, and passed the high school finals. 'Passed' is perhaps saying too much, it was all phony - I cribbed all math from the guy sitting next to me. I wanted to study medicine, that was the easiest thing to do - I worked in a hospital, had some foundations for that. But then I quickly changed my mind and in 1949 decided to take an admittance exam to the Theatre School in Lodz. We had distant cousins in Lodz, Regina and Karola Milichtajch. Regina was our private tutor before the war. Both survived in the Lodz ghetto and at the last moment were sent to forced labor in Germany. Until the end of the war they worked at some German farm. Then they returned to Poland to see if anyone had survived. And it was then we got in touch. I arrived in Lodz virtually naked and barefoot, utterly penniless, because Rozenowicz said he was opposed to the whole idea of me studying. I didn't even have money for the streetcar fare. For a short time I stayed with those cousins. Karola, the younger one, studied at a nursing college, and the older one, Regina, had the pre-war high school diploma, so she was a white-collar worker, because the pre-war diploma was a big thing. She worked at an official labor union organization. I borrowed a little bit of money from them to get me through the initial period and became self-dependent very quickly. Many people were eager to help me, but I was doing great myself. And at the end of my freshman year at the academy I was given a role - a Film School team visited us and they hired me for a movie they were making. It was a group of young filmmakers who were shooting a production with the assistance of their professors. They came to the Theater School in search of nice girls. And they chose me. The movie was a terrible bore, called 'The Two Brigades', really nothing to talk about. Well, but what did I care - I had something to do, I could earn some money, and the very fact that from among all those girls they had chosen me meant a lot in itself. So I no longer had money problems.