

# Danuta Mniewska In The Veterans' Group In Germany



This is me in the veterans' group in Germany in 2004. I went there to meet young people. The first from left is the mayor of Paderborn. I remember two persons from our group: my friend [second from right in the first row] and the man of my left. He is Polish, ex-prisoner of Auschwitz. I remember that his stories were really shocking - during the war he had worked in a crematorium of the concentration camp. I never encountered any anti-Semitism directed against me after the war. I never went around with a placard saying I was a Jew, but everyone knew; it was no secret. I currently hold the position of treasurer with the veterans, but I want to leave them and move to the TSKZ library. Its manager has died, she was 95, active until the last moment. Someone has to carry out the stocktaking, I'll gladly do it, for free, of course, I need no remuneration. I simply want to be doing something. After all, we are the last Jews here. When trips to Germany were being organized, I accidentally joined one of those, in 2001. I went there a total of three times to meet young people, and I loved it. After so many years I had the cheek to conduct those meetings in German - and I did great. I had such good contact with those young people, saw they were interested, and I felt satisfaction that I was doing something good. I told them about my wartime experiences. I feel a very strong bond with Jewry. Those are two different things - religion and being part of a nation. I'll put it like Tuwim: I feel Jewish not because of the blood of my veins but because of the blood that has been shed. This is a completely different story, this is an incredible bond, that you lost everyone only because they happened to be Jews. And betray them?! How can you conceal your descent, deny, disown your family, relatives?? It has always been in me and will always be, and I'll never abandon it. But still - despite the tragedy that I experienced - I wouldn't give away a single hour of my life. Not a single hour.