

Mojsze Sznejser At Work In His Cobbler's Workshop



That's what I look like now, at the time I'm telling you my story. I'm in my workshop on Kartuska Street in Legnica. In 1960 I opened my own place and I sat and made shoes. Here in Legnica everyone always knew and still does, that I'm a Jew. I've never really had any problems. On Kartuska Street everyone knows me well. I tell them, 'This is who I am, and I'm not going to change.' In 1968 I remember that it wasn't much fun when all that fuss reached us in Legnica. It was just Gomulka's work. Well, not his on his own, but the Polish communist party's, but he made the most noise: 'All the Moszkes [Moses] to their dayyan!' And I sent my children away. I said to

them, 'What can you do? Go.' I thought that they would have a new place there, that perhaps they'd make a place for us. My son Szama went to Israel and my daughter Syma to Denmark. I thought that one day the wife and I would go to live with one of them. I stayed in Legnica with Dawid, my eldest son. He didn't want to leave, because he didn't want to leave me. My wife died in 1986, right after the disaster in Russia [the April 1986 disaster at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant in the Ukraine]. She went out early in the morning, breathed in the air and that was it, at once. She died shortly afterwards. My son married here in Legnica. But then he threw his wife out. Because she told me that when she's in the kitchen she didn't want to see me. In my house! So Dawid threw her out. And I carried on working. And I still work to this day, you have to live a normal life, see. And I miss Lukow, my town, life was good there. Not long ago this guy came in with a pair of shoes to repair. And he asks me whether I'm not from Lukow. Someone had recommended me, someone from those parts. He gave me the work. Other than that there's no work, but you want to chat. Sit and wait to die? You have to keep going.