

Emanuel Elbinger At The Age Of 74



This photo was taken in 2005 when I had to replace my ID card.

In all my jobs everybody always knew that I'm a Jew and generally speaking I had good, decent relations. I never made a thing of it, never introduced myself as such, but I never hid it either, and I was left alone. If people wanted to tell Jewish jokes, they did it in my absence. I didn't have to listen to that.

The only organization I belong to is the Children of the Holocaust Association, and I don't want anything else, because I think that's what I need, there is where I find people with similar stories. We have meetings once a month. There are 60 people enrolled in Cracow, I think, but if 40 of them come it's a good show. It's a lot, because lately a lot of that association is falling off, and some people only signed up for the benefits - there were reductions for the trams, for medication too. I'm maybe the oldest in the group, because people older than me can't be members of that association

- the condition is that you had to have been no older than 16 after the war. In general they don't know much, because most of them were babies, hidden with other people. They don't know anything and the religion doesn't interest them much. I'm an agnostic too myself, so there's no problem there.

Once, at a Children of the Holocaust meeting, Prof. Aleksandrowicz came to talk to us. Jerzy, son of Prof. Julian Aleksandrowicz [the hematologist]. He's a physician too, but a psychiatrist, and he told us that what we went through kind of enriches us, because we have a different take on things. He's a Child of the Holocaust himself. I knew him years ago, because we used to go on camp together. He's several years younger than me for first, and for second he had a full family after the war, father and mother. I say that I have to disagree with what he says, that it enriches us. I think it's the opposite, at least in my case, that what I went through more like suffocated me, because I was always inhibited, I always felt like I was treated worse, because what I went through affected my psyche. And I think that anybody who experienced that time as a child but more or less aware of things, it has to affect you like that. And none of us are 100 percent mentally in order. To different degrees. My sister's in a worse state, she even had to be in the hospital, but I don't want to talk about that.