

In 81 I went to Italy. While in Trieste, we were told: 'Where are you going back to Poland? Don't go, there's Russian tanks everywhere. Why do you even want to go back?'

Even in Trieste, there were Polish people, owning some shops. I was told I could work there, but I couldn't stay- Maciek, my son was little, Ludwik, my husband, was not very resourceful, and I couldn't leave them over there, I had to go back. I got on the train, it was winter, around noon, Martial Law on Sunday, nobody came to pick me up from the station. I can't remember whether I got back home by taxi.. And I brought with me coffee, chocolate, wines and Martini, which were all luxurious good at that time. And that's how it started for me, but nothing bad happened to me personally. I only asked the army men on the train, who checked passports : What is going on in Poland?

None of them gave me an answer. Is it true that it is a bloodshed over there? (That's what I was told in Italy, still very exaggerated.)

When I came back I didn't see anything unusual. Peace and quiet. There was nothing interesting going on in my neighbourhood. In the evenings- obviously- we weren't allowed to go out. Once Ludwik went out with the dog for a walk, as we had a big royal poodle. He wasn't coming back for a longer time so I looked out the window to see what was going on. There was a group of men walking outside, with Ludwik amongst them. They walked him home to see if he really lived here. They left the dog alone but brought Ludwik right to the front door. They asked me whether it was my husband.

They also told us not to leave the house so late. Ludwik took the dog for a walk, maybe 30metres further than usual. People used to walk to work. However, those who had cars were so nice- you would wave at them and they would take you with them. Back then no one was afraid to get into a stranger's car, people just helped each other out, they were different.

People are much more neutral today. I think they are insensitive. But I am not surprised, I've become rather insensitive myself. Back then I could help a drunk man cross the street but today I wouldn't do that because I'd be scared. Those emotions have burnt out.