

Jerzy Silberring



This is my son Jerzy Silberring. The picture was taken in Oliwa, near Gdansk, a city on the Baltic Sea. We were on vacation with friends, the Zeleski family. I remember Zeleski buying for his daughter Zosia books for high school there. So Zosia was 15 and Jerzy was 12 years old and it must have been 1961. My son, Jerzy, was born on 30th May 1949 in Cracow. When he was small my husband was against my going to work because he wouldn't entrust anyone with the child, wouldn't have anyone take it. When my son was bigger I put my foot down and got a terribly bad job, because it was a part-time post, so I could still manage the house. Once my son was at school, I used to get up at 5am to clean, send him off to school at 8, and then I went out to work for those four hours. I picked him up from school on my way back. I had to cook, wash, do everything, so that job suited me. It was in an office. And the relations there were good. A lot of perks came with it then, because there was nothing in the shops, and we had a buffet downstairs and there was ham. Not every day. Everyone got an allocated ration, but I had ham and there was something to give the child. One fine day, when he was in second grade, he came running home and says: 'Mom! Is it true that you're a 'Zydka'?! I say: 'Not a Zydka, but a Zydowka.' 'Because my friends told me.' Some friend's mother, who knew us - anyway, I never hid it. Except that after the war there were none of the traditions, unfortunately. So he knows he's Jewish, but nothing else. He didn't change his name, either, and as he's always saying, being Jewish has never harmed him. Jerzy was very friendly with Zosia Zeleska. He was still at elementary school and she was in high school. They were madly in love for many years. Her father was a professor at the Polytechnic in Wroclaw. And he always used to say, 'I don't know whether it's Zosia who's so stupid or Jerzy so clever.' He couldn't understand that they had so much in common. She graduated in architecture. She lives in New York and is in artistic photography, she's an assistant to Horowitz.