

Julian Gringras At The Swimming Pool



This is a photograph of me at the Szczesliwicki swimming pool in Warsaw. It was taken in 1964.

I used to like swimming - I can't swim well but I used to swim as well as anyone, breaststroke; I like taking a run-up and diving into the water best. I usually used to go swimming with my wife, Fela Baum.

Before the war we also used to swim often. In Kielce even then there was a beautiful swimming pool that we used to go to. On the outskirts of Kielce, in this young wood.

A swimming pool where there was even a diving tower. And I used to go to that swimming pool with Fela, we would bathe, swim, dive into the water, I even broke my nose, I remember, trying to dive off the springboard.

You didn't feel in that town what you felt in Warsaw. Well, in any case nobody harassed us at the swimming pool. And the war was approaching fast.

I had moved back to Kielce from Warsaw for that period. I was due to have my graduation examination right after the vacations in 1939.

And as you do in the vacations, we still went swimming, we would go out of town to the summer resort of Bialogon, to Slowik, 7 km from Kielce, and we would swim in that river, the Biebrza.

There was calm in the city. No-one suspected, no-one talked of war. In Warsaw before the vacation it hadn't been tangible either. Though we knew what was going on in Germany, we knew about the Kristallnacht.

I spent most of my time with Fela. I rode a motorbike. That motorbike belonged to my brother-in-law Obarzanski, this big, heavy motorbike. Obarzanski was the husband of Roza, my eldest sister.

On the last day of peace my wife, who was a girl of about 22 then, even cycled to Slowik to swim.