

Hanna We With Her Son, Jan



This is me with my son, Jan. I think this picture was taken in 1965 or 1966 in Warsaw. It's a studio portrait.

My husband was - he's been dead quite some time now - Polish. He was born in 1923. His name was Jerzy. We met as students. He was an engineer; he worked at the Institute of Fundamental Technical Matters. I entered a Polish family. That suited me perfectly. Indeed, my husband shared my opinion that the best thing to do was to assimilate and immerse oneself in Polish society.

After the war, with a husband who wasn't Jewish, we celebrated the Christian holidays in a traditional fashion, with his parents and with his sister. To this day I celebrate them that way. But it's not deep observance. We didn't go to Midnight Mass. My husband was a militant atheist, so there was no question. He was against all religion far more so than I was. But for Christmas Eve dinner he liked to have fish. His atheism was the result of his having been brought up to be a Catholic. Later on he rebelled awfully. But the customs - breaking the wafer, for instance - he accepted. He hadn't rebelled to the extent that he wanted to upset his mother or his sister.

My son, Jan, was born in 1958. He went to elementary school in Ochota, and then to the Gottwald High School, because early on he had an interest in mathematics. He studied mathematics and now he is a mathematician at the University of Arizona, USA. He left Poland with his wife and child in 1985, at the time of the political upheavals here. He went there to do his doctorate. Once he'd done it he stayed there. His wife, Beata, is a painter. Their son, Mateusz, is 22 and he's studying psychology. My son is half-Jewish; he's not Jewish, so there's a difference. Fortunately he doesn't have any complexes, because he didn't experience all that horror. He doesn't have the baggage

that I have. Unlike me he wasn't an over-sensitive child. But he understands Jewish issues one hundred percent.