

Witold Nieznanski



This is my son Witek [short for Witold] in the infant's nursery at Ladyslawa Street in Warsaw in the 1950s.

In 1952 I married Henryka. There's two years' age difference between us. She isn't Jewish. We met in Warsaw through a common friend. Our daughter Ewa was born in 1953, and a son, Witek, followed in 1954.

My son, Witek, is in Sweden. He had been going there to earn money by picking berries, went again in 1980, and never returned. He worked at the psychiatric hospital in Uppsala. He started as a paramedic, but the doctors appreciated him and he was promoted, ran the psychiatric outpatient clinic. Last year he got promoted again and is the manager of the municipal department of psychiatry in Uppsala. So he ceased being a doctor and became an office worker. He attended English courses at the British Institute, where he was taught by his future wife. She obviously taught him to become her husband, and so they got married. His wife's name is Valerie, she's English. I went there, the wedding was in grand style. They traveled the world for ten years, and after ten years they got married. Then came the children. They have two daughters, Chana and Rebecca. Chana is 15, and Rebecca is eight years old. Unfortunately, they don't speak Polish.

My son started questioning me, 'Dad,' he says, 'the girls are supposed to write school essays about their roots, their descent, draw their genealogical tree. Start writing.' So when they asked me to record [for the Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation], I gave the whole tape to my son. He translated it into English or Swedish, and now they're proud of their grandfather who lives in Poland.

There is no problem in his family whether he's Jewish or not. I was in England, to visit his parents-in-law, I was received by an Anglican priest. Everyone knows my parents were in the ghetto. The notion of anti-Semitism doesn't exist there at all, and we got really close with his wife, too. My son, in turn, has been more and more interested in his Jewishness. How so? Well, he's connected to

Warsaw there through the Internet, reads the Polish press, and he's really absorbed with all those things. So I started sending him books, magazines.