

## Danuta Mniewska In The 1960s



This is me in the 1960s. That picture was taken by the famous Polish photographer Zofia Nasierowska. After the war I wanted to study. I enrolled for a high-school course for adults, I was already twenty-something, and passed the high school finals. 'Passed' is perhaps saying too much, it was all phony - I cribbed all math from the guy sitting next to me. I wanted to study medicine, that was the easiest thing to do - I worked in a hospital, had some foundations for that. But then I quickly changed my mind and in 1949 decided to take an admittance exam to the Theatre School in Lodz. . Many people were eager to help me, but I was doing great myself. And at the end of my freshman year at the academy I was given a role - a Film School team visited us and they hired me for a movie they were making. It was a group of young filmmakers who were shooting a production with the assistance of their professors. They came to the Theater School in search of nice girls. And

they chose me. The movie was a terrible bore, called 'The Two Brigades', really nothing to talk about. Well, but what did I care - I had something to do, I could earn some money, and the very fact that from among all those girls they had chosen me meant a lot in itself. So I no longer had money problems. In my third year of studies I met Kazimierz Dejmek, he was the school's president. I fell in love with him. He was married, but I didn't destroy the marriage, God forbid - he had already left her. He was born in 1924 in Kowel. Kazik was in the second grade of gymnasium when the war broke out. After the war, he passed the actor's exams extramurally with Schiller in Lodz. And then he was appointed president of the School. He had top-level connections in the party, and the party had immense confidence in him. And such a young boy was appointed an academy president. He held the office for a very short time - he didn't like the job, never wanted it, they forced him, had no one else. I was deeply infatuated with Dejmek. And one day I received a letter from my husband, Bronislaw Rozenowicz, saying he saw what was going on and was asking me to come back so that we could start all over. Before that, he insisted we get married by license, but I didn't want to because I knew it wouldn't work anyway. I was his wife only in religious terms and we had in fact divorced each other by mail because the paper from the rabbi had no legal force. After two years Rozenowicz sent me a suitcase with my things and on top of that lay that document. I thought: 'I can't tear it to pieces like a piece of litter because my conscience won't allow me - so many things we went through together, so much of everything? If I could, I'd burn it in the fire'. I put it aside with a bunch of photos I had. My husband spent the rest of his life in Czestochowa. He died in the early 1990s. He was a very good doctor. When I sometimes meet Jews from there and they find out I was Rozenowicz's wife, they exclaim, 'Rozenowicz?! Why, he is the legend of Czestochowa!' In 1953 my son Piotrus was born. I worked at the Nowy Theater in Lodz. Those days, a theater actor had to be versatile; you had to sing, dance, play in contemporary dramas and classical tragedies. Life was hard for me there because my second husband was the director general there and he had a policy of anti-nepotism. For instance, when the director said he wanted to give me a role, my husband would first offer that role to all the other girls. And only when the director said: 'I don't want anyone except Mniewska', he'd agree. He destroyed my professional career. But, well - you can't have everything.