

Michal Nadel With His Son Aleksander



This is me with my son Aleksander. The photo was taken in 1951 on holidays in Cieplice, where we used to go in Summer. It must have been taken simply on the street by some photographer but I don't remember his name.

Aleksander was born in 1947, in May. He has a name after my father. In 1968 he was a tall handsome boy. His friends used to call him a sheriff. 1.86 meter tall, he danced beautifully, sang beautifully. He didn't belong to the party. He studied medicine in Lodz at the Medical Academy. When student strikes began, he was made a delegate of the Department of Medicine. Because he was so outgoing, made contacts easily. Fortunately some professors at the department were decent and one of them warned him he was going to be arrested.

Olek [short for Aleksander] had a passport, he was going to leave for the holidays. I can't remember where to now. He got on a train and went to Copenhagen. He stayed there. We were supposed to join him, the whole family. We had been planning to go to Israel, but I was so upset about him leaving that I got a heart attack. And there was no way I could go anywhere in these conditions. Olek also wrote that was out of the question, they would upset me on the border... so I stayed.

Aleksander had a girlfriend at the university in Poland. After 2 years, when Olek was already in the 5th year of Medicine in Copenhagen, she went to him, pretending that it was just on a trip, and stayed there. They got married. But she didn't want to seek political refugee status, because she had parents in Poland and didn't want to break contacts with the country. She was a Christian. If she had applied for refuge, she would have had a chance to go study, receive a scholarship, and help in Denmark. But she didn't want that, so she had nothing to live off. Olek decided to go to work, so that she could finish studying, and then he'd go back to the university and finish his degree. But he never went back to the studies. She graduated. He started working as a taxi driver to earn a living. For himself and for her. And then he saved some money or took a loan, bought his own taxi and started his own transport company. He has some income.

We got a permit to visit our son for the first time in 1973. It was a short visit. In the meantime my wife stayed in Copenhagen and I went to Israel. My son got me the visa.

Olek has two sons. Kuba comes from Copenhagen, but studies in Warsaw. He is finishing medicine. And there's also Misiak. He's also from Copenhagen. He is, I think, on the 1st or 2nd year of Computer Science.

My sons weren't raised in the Jewish tradition, but they were interested, and still are interested in Jewish history. I know and I noticed that they know the history really well. It's a different matter with grandchildren. Olek, when he settled in Copenhagen, influenced by friends, got closer to the Jewish tradition. He doesn't know Jewish or Hebrew, but had a bar mitzvah and circumcisions for his sons. Formally they are Jewish. We have a very good contact with each other.