

Henryk Lewandowski On Board The Ship To Israel



This photo of me was taken on the ship to Israel. In 1967 I went to Israel to visit my father. After the nationalization my father applied to immigrate to Israel but they weren't giving permissions anymore, he didn't leave until after October 1956, when it became legal again. He left with Wanda, but she broke up with him and later returned to Poland. Wanda was Polish, yet she settled in better than he did. He had big trouble with the Hebrew language, the alphabet. In Israel my father was not politically active anymore, I know he met with Begin, who was not Prime Minister yet, but the opposition leader, although everyone knew he would take the power eventually. Father was angry with Begin, he didn't like that the ever so secular party was so amicable towards the religious Jews. Begin explained to him that they needed the American money, and that the American Jews would donate it only if the party was religious. And so my father ended up not joining the party, he was a

blue-collar worker, a night guard at the Haifa harbor; later he had some health problems, he had the Buerger disease in one leg, then also in the other, and so he retired and lived off his disability pension. I went to see Father in 1967, it was my first trip to Israel. I stayed for more than a month. I went through Greece on my way there and through Italy on the way back, so I did some sightseeing. Father lived outside Haifa at the time, in Kiriath Yam, a lot of Jews from the African and Asian countries lived there. The living conditions were rather harsh. I've seen my father twice more, on neutral ground, in Romania - first time in 1969, and then in 1983, on his 75th birthday. I wanted him to meet my son, I wanted my daughter to come, too, but she couldn't, she was the Orbis resident in Spain, but my son came. I worked for Gromada at that time, I could arrange a foreign trip for me and my son. He's met his Grandpa. I remember when we met for the second time, it was also our last time, in Constanta, Romania, I told him I'd been wrong holding it against him that he'd married Wanda. Although they were already divorced, I could feel he'd really hoped to hear such a statement from me, we hadn't spoken about it before but it had always been there between us.