

Jerzy Pikielny And His Mother Czeslawa Tikitin In Rabka



Here you can see me with my mother, Czeslawa Tikitin (nee Drutowska). This picture was taken in Rabka, when we were on holiday. I don't know who took it. I was born in 1926. I didn't go to school until third grade because I was always ill, I often had bronchitis. At first I went to a private co-educational school called 'Our School.' Most of the students were Jewish. Two Jewish women ran it. We had teas with our class tutor in her apartment. We spoke with her about almost everything. I don't remember her name, unfortunately. At 'Our School' we spoke freely with the teachers about the opposite sex, something unthinkable at the all-male school I later attended. We didn't observe any religious rituals at home. Grandma Pikielny's was the only place we had some contact with the Jewish traditions. We had holiday dinners there. Although my father was the eldest it was usually his brother Maks who led the prayers. Alek, his son, was a year older than me and had had a bar mitzvah. I didn't have one, because in October it was already war. I guess if I'd been supposed to have one I would've had to be prepared for it earlier, and there'd been none of that. I did have Jewish religion classes at school though, because they were compulsory. I knew we were Jews. I felt it was a strange thing to be. During a stay at the Rabka sanatorium I shared a room with a boy and I told him I was Jewish. I don't recall having any trouble because of that. I didn't speak of it the next time I was there, though. During another stay, I don't remember what year it was, I met a boy, older than me. His father was an officer of some kind, or maybe even the deputy mayor of Warsaw. The boy told me the Germans would do us Poles no harm, and if war broke out, we would win it of course, and we would drop Jewish heads on Berlin from airplanes. Such were the moods at the time.