

Leon Glazer And His Wife Julia With Their Grandchildren



This is my wife Julia and I, with our grandchildren Paulina Pankowska and Daniel Pankowski. The photo was taken outside Jerusalem in 1994 during our first trip to Israel. Earlier that year my daughter's family emigrated to Israel, where they stayed for eight years. My daughter and son-in-law didn't have a car back then, so we did the sightseeing on the bus. My daughter and son-in-law wanted to emigrate because of marital problems, just to change something in their lives. My son-in-law is called Andrzej Pankowski. They have two children: Paulina, who's 15 now, and Daniel, he's at university. They went away in January 1994; at that time it was still fairly calm in Israel. They went there literally on the off-chance, and stayed eight years. They lived in Kiryat Yam at first, and then in Kiryat Chaim near Haifa. When they left, none of them spoke Hebrew. First they had a language training course, a short one. My grandson picked the language up quickest, then my son-in-law. Yes, it's true. And my son-in-law could speak fantastic Hebrew there. Better than my daughter even. My granddaughter, Paulina, picked the language up quickly in kindergarten too. After six months we went there to visit them. It was after Rosh Hashanah and before Yom Kippur. The customs official in the port, in Haifa, asked us where we intended to spend Yom Kippur. And I say, 'At home, I think - we'll make it.' There was such a control, it was awful. Like never. Well, by then it was that unsettled time. That first time the whole family went, my son, my daughter-in-law Danuta, and my granddaughter Dominika, a year older than Paulina. We were there two months. By car to Greece and then by ferry to Haifa. I couldn't understand anything when I went to Israel. I felt very bad with that. It was only when I met some Jews from Poland that I somehow managed to communicate with them. That was an unforgettable trip, really. I don't know, what plan I had? To see. To see Israel, for the first time in my life. It was hard to imagine it all, how people live in Israel. I was impressed with Israel, that it was so beautiful. Well everything was beautiful, really. Well, sea like sea, but the shops and the cafes - it was a totally different life from ours. In Poland, it was still a bit of a mess back then. They still weren't doing too well for themselves at that time. They didn't have work yet, at first they were on this kind of benefit and they were living in this big apartment

block for immigrants. We'd taken them a bit of money in dollars: well, how could we go to visit our children without taking them anything? All in all we've been to Israel to visit three times. In the summer of 1995 my wife and I went on our own. Without our son, because my son won't fly; he says he won't get in a plane, although he's a taxi driver. The third time my wife and I flew too, in the summer of 1996. Now I'm not planning to go to Israel, because I've got no-one to go to. I could go to those friends of mine, but there's not really any way anymore, because it's the age thing too.