

Leon Drutowski



This photo was taken in Warsaw in the 1950s. It shows my uncle Lolek Drutowski, my mother's brother, whom we nicknamed Lolek. I don't know who that woman is. Lolek was two years younger than my mom. He was born in 1899 in Lodz. As soon as the Legions were formed, Lolek, who was still underage, ran away to the army and so Grandpa went to look for him. He found him brushing horses in some unit. Lolek was a co-founder of the Polish scouting organization in Lodz. The troop was named after Tadeusz Kosciuszko and Lolek was its scoutmaster. He probably served in the army in the 1920s. First he studied at Warsaw University of Technology and later at the mechanical and electrical faculty in Liege, Belgium. After graduation he returned for a short time and started to work at his father and uncle's factory. But, just like his father, Lolek didn't get on well with Uncle Jozef and soon went back to Belgium. In Belgium he met his first wife, Dennise. At first he worked in Cologne, Germany, and commuted there from Liege by motorbike every week, coming back home for Sundays. Every time he crossed the German-Belgian border the Germans would halt him and order a personal search. He said that later he'd head straight for the control point himself. Later on Lolek owned an oil boiler factory in Belgium. After the outbreak of the war he left Belgium and lived somewhere in France, in the unoccupied zone. His departure was partly caused by the fact that Dennise's family strongly opposed their marriage, mainly because of his Jewish origins - something which I learned of from Uncle Lolek's second wife. Lolek was only intending to be away for a short time. Apparently, when he returned in 1944 or 1945 Dennise was already with someone else. He remarried upon returning to Poland in 1947. His wife's name was Maria Kazimiera, nee Kuras. That aunt is not Jewish either. She was born on 7th May 1914. Now she's partly paralyzed and lives in the Matysiaki Old People's Home in Warsaw. After returning to Lodz, Lolek started work at the Military Automotive Works. A few years later he was transferred to the Ministry of Light Industry and Crafts. That's when he and his wife moved to Warsaw. Later he worked in one of the Ministry's institutes. He died in 1964.