

Edward Filipowski



This is a photograph of my best friend and future brother-in-law Mosze Baum.

He is a very young boy in this picture, so it could have been taken around 1926-1928. He was born in 1912.

We both used to go to the same gymnasium, and we studied at Warsaw Polytechnic together. His sister Fela was my wife.

We got into the Polish by passing an exam, in 1926, I think. I sat mathematics, Polish; Latin started once you got into the gymnasium, I only had it for four years.

But two of us took the examination, my future brother-in-law and I. He did better than me; he was taken at once, but I had to re-sit the exam six months later.

Four years of gymnasium, from 5th to 8th grade, 4 grades. In 1927 I started, something like that, more or less. Matriculation was in 1930.

I was in a class that numbered around 50 students. The class teacher was Konradi, the Latin master. 50 pupils, three of them Jewish, with surnames that made up a tiny fragment of landscape.

You see, there was Baum - a tree; there was Gringras, or green grass; and there was an apple, he was called Jablko, the third one, not Appel, but Jablko [Mr. Gringras is translating the surnames].

As it happened, in terms of level, we, the three of us, were top of the class. There were a few clever Poles, but not many. Some of them were one-sided, mastered literature well, for instance.

Our classmates used to go to Baum's house; he helped them in math, Polish, etc., he was very helpful. They didn't come to me.

After the matriculation exam, Mosze Baum and I sat for the Polytechnic. Why? I don't know what drove me. 180 boys sat for the first year, about 10 percent of whom were Jews.

So something in the way of numerus clausus did exist. Not nullus but clausus. We came to Warsaw in 1931 or 1932]and we took a lodging, with Madame Fürst.

I think Mrs. Fürst was a Jew. She was round about 60 or so then. She was a peculiar person, originally came from Germany, spoke fluent German, good Polish, sometimes told these not particularly refined anecdotes, a bit coarse.

Our floor was the 6th floor, a little room. It was on the main street, Marszałkowska. In the courtyard, of course, not at the front, but in the courtyard, no elevator, but we had a superb view from there.

From our window you could see the Cedergren, the former telegraphic switchboard on Zielna Street, it's the Nissenbaum Foundation today. And we used to flirt with the telephonists through the window, at a distance of a good 100 meters.

Mosze Baum survived the war. After the war he changed his name to Edzio Filipowski. Many Jews changed their names.

Until 1941 he was in Lwow, and then, after the outbreak of the German-Soviet War, he moved to Polish territory, where he was in hiding but doing teaching at the same time, what was known as secret teaching - he traveled round villages and taught Polish children.

After the war Baum married Lida. She was a Pole. He died at the age of 65, more or less.