

Koppel Gringras And His Father And Brother Playing Chess



This is a photograph of my father, my grandfather and my father's brother Moric playing chess. It was taken in 1936 in our apartment on Czysa Street in Kielce.

Father liked chess. Moric liked chess, and Grandfather liked chess. Though at one point chess became an addiction for Father. And an addiction that cost. In Kielce, you see, there were two patisseries.

One was called Smolinski's and the other the Royal. It was probably the Royal where for some time Father and Moric would sit and play chess for money, they tried to win and make money.

That met with great disapproval from my mother, because the winnings probably didn't bring in any profit. Only losses, I presume.

I learned to play chess in Kielce too; I think we all, all the men in the family, could play chess a bit. In the patisserie it was not only Jews playing amongst themselves, but various different people played - true-blue Poles, Catholics.

Religion, profession played no role there, because the chess itself was something we could call an ecumenical calling. People got together because they liked chess - and they played.