

The Wedding Of Maurycy Gringras's Son Rysio



This is a photo taken in Israel in March 1958.

It was the wedding of my brother Maurycy's son, who we called Rysio, though his real name is Henryk. Maurycy is standing first on the left, next to him is Rysio, then Rysio's wife Dina, Maurycy's wife Lola, my sister Ziuka, her husband Chaskiel Majtek and his mother. At the table are sitting my brother Artur and his wife Anka.

When Artur and his children came back to Poland from the USSR, the family came together again. And then that family emigrated to Israel in the 1950s, in 1951 or 1952.

No, there were no problems emigrating then. If you had the opportunity it wasn't difficult. Then Maurycy left with his family, with his wife Lola and little boy Henryk.

And the third, Leopold, went to Sweden, also with his wife and two daughters, one of whom, Inka, emigrated from Sweden to Israel and lives there to this day.

I think she's still alive. I'm not sure that they'd all have gone if it hadn't been for the Kielce pogrom.

In Israel Artur set himself up a good-sized photographic firm and worked as a photographer. He was assisted by my other brother Maurycy and his wife, because she was a photographer by trade too.

Artur came here, to Poland, before his death, when he was 84 or so in the mid-1980s. In Wroclaw that time he got hold of a set of photographs that German soldiers often used to take during the war: photographs of Jews and Polish peasants.

Artur collected those photographs and I think he donated them to a museum in Jerusalem.

I had very infrequent contact with the family in Israel. That was due to the political situation. There was total isolation at that time, you see. Since 1956 there had been no diplomatic relations, and contact was not permitted at all.

I never considered the possibility of emigrating. I had my well-defined views, very firm communist convictions. Even before the war I'd dreamed of a Poland where life would be good and fair.

Where Jews wouldn't be discriminated, there would be no anti-Semitism. That was a dream of mine, probably straight out of books by Zeromski, who was my idol at the time.

I suspect that was it. But my brothers were neither communists nor Zionists. And they emigrated.