

Leopold Sokolowski With His Wife Gabriela



This is me, Leopold Sokolowski, with my wife, Gabriela. This picture was taken during our holiday in Poland in the 1960s.

In 1948 I married a non-Jew, Gabriela Utrata. When one is 22 and comes to Poznan straight from military school, where was I to look for a Jew? Where would I find one? I was lucky, for my wife knows even less about Christianity than I do. She was raised by the communists. I have great respect for that. My father-in-law, a carpenter, was a member of the KPP, and my mother-in-law was also active in the communist movement. They didn't go to church, but they used to send their daughter, that is my wife, to a grandmother or an aunt. When she was in the countryside she was taken to church, maybe they taught her something, but she did not have a religious education.

I went out with her and after a few months I went to her parents to ask for her hand in marriage. My wife arranged that I'd come and we'd talk. I brought some flowers or some alcohol, I don't remember which. I introduced myself, and said that I came here - well, they knew I didn't come to look at the furniture, but to visit Gabrysia - because I had serious intentions. Therefore I should explain certain things to them. I don't have a family, I am alone, and I am a Jew, if they don't mind. My father-in-law just sat there, without saying anything, but when I said that I'm Jewish he reacted right away. He said, 'Comrade Leopold, before the war I used to go to jail together with Jews, not to make any distinctions. I will be proud to have a Jewish son-in-law!' So in this respect I found a good family.