

Julian Gringras And His Wife Fela Baum



This is me and my wife Fela. We are out walking just outside Kielce, near the monastery in Karczowka. It could have been 1937 or 1938.

At the time I was studying in Warsaw but sometimes I went home. I don't remember why I was home that time.

My future brother-in-law, 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.

I came to Warsaw in 1931 or 1932 and we took a lodging, a room 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, Marszalkowska. 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.

I didn't have much of a social life during my studies. Those matters connected with politics were very absorbing. I came into contact with the socialist organization OMS Zycie at the Polytechnic.

Both Jews and Poles belonged to Zycie; the Poles were usually from proletarian backgrounds, as you used to say. Later on I was also a member of the Communist Union of Polish Youth.