

Mosze Prywes



This is my cousin, the son of my mama's sister Bronka, Mosze Prywes.

Already as a young boy Mosze was a self-confessed Zionist; he belonged to the organization Hashomer Hatzair, and graduated from a Hebrew gymnasium.

He married a woman called Poznanska in Lodz, I can't remember her first name, and went to Israel.

There he graduated from university, did a doctorate, an assistant professorship, and was a university lecturer in Jerusalem, a professor of sociology.

His wife went with him to Jerusalem and they had two children, but then she didn't want to live in Israel, and she took the children and went to Canada. He lost touch with them.

He didn't marry again; his family life was destroyed. He died in the 1980s. This photograph is from 1969.

Neither before war nor later did I want to emigrate to Palestine. I wanted a Jewish state; I believed it was necessary. But that didn't move me like the misery that I saw with my own eyes.

But a lot of my family, especially this part from Skryhiczyn went there even before there was terrible anti-Semitism and Hitler.

My cousins didn't really have any other alternative, in fact, because they didn't have any money to go to school or university. But they knew all about farming and could work hard. They were attracted to Palestine.

Several kibbutzim, among them Kineret, were established by members of my family: the Rottenbergs, the Szydlofskis, the Pryweses.

My mama, later, during the greatest persecutions, in the war, said that when the war was over she was going straight to Palestine, she wasn't going to stay in Poland.

Before the end of 1945 my cousin Chadasz from Israel [Palestine at the time], from the Kineret kibbutz, came to visit me. He had been fighting in the British army, and I think he was returning from Germany then. He had come to take us back with him to Israel.

One had to cross two borders illegally, so I told him at once that that would be impossible, because I had a small baby. But my cousins Estera Rottenberg and Hanka Szydlofska went with him. I didn't think about emigrating there, not even when the state of Israel was established.

I had started working, and I found my job extremely interesting. Besides, I had never been a Zionist. I think that if Israel had come into being earlier maybe the Holocaust wouldn't have happened, or at least not on such a scale.

Later on I remained in touch with my family in Israel by letter all the time. I went there to visit several times; I had to go via Paris, get a visa from the embassy there, and go on to Israel from there. But I never wanted to stay there permanently.