

Julian Gringras With His Mother And Brothers



This is a photograph of my mother with four of her five sons. Simon, the eldest, was already in Palestine.

It was taken in my father's photographic studio, 'Moderne,' around 1925. I am first on the left, then Mama, Leopold, Maurycy and Artur.

Mama's name was Fajgla, I don't remember the name exactly, because we called Mama Mama. How my mother came to marry my father, when they met, I don't know either.

All I know is that when she left Pinczow she emigrated to Switzerland with Father.

After six years in Switzerland they came to Kielce; they probably had some money saved up.

To be a recognized craftsman you had to buy a license, I seem to remember. I suspect it was in around 1908, maybe 1909 or 1910 that the Moderne photographic firm was opened, and it soon began to grow.

My second oldest brother was Artur, or Adolf, but after Hitler's rise to power he changed it to Artur - but what his Jewish name was I don't know.

I suspect that Artur, who neared the age of conscription slightly later than Simon, also tried to dodge his draft.

He used to drink black coffee like that, I remember. In any case they didn't call him up. Artur graduated from gymnasium; he didn't matriculate.

The third boy is Maurycy. He was born in Switzerland. Maurycy was born in 1905, 1906; he was five years or so older than me.

My brother Maurycy went gray at the age of about 16 or 17. He went gray suddenly.

I went gray much later, at the normal age, 30-something. But that was at the time I was in the Soviet Union. He was terribly highly strung, talented, played the piano and painted well. He was artistically gifted.

Then there's Leopold, born in Switzerland too. Leopold was perhaps four years older than me. In Yiddish Leopold is Lipe, or Lipek, I think. He used to be called Lipek.

Roza was officially called Eugenia - she was born in Switzerland. We used to call her Rozia, Rozka, she was older than me too. Maybe two, three years. Children were born close together there, as you can tell. But nine children!

Then there was me, born in 1911 in Kielce. Julian. I probably had a Jewish name. I don't remember when I changed it. From being a child they always called me Julek. I don't remember my Jewish name.