

Arnold Polak And Anna Knezova Schönbrunova



This photo was taken at the beginning of the 1950s and shows my wife Anna Knezova Schönbrunova and our ?adoptive son? Arnold Polak on the street in Bratislava. Two families from Michalovce have been permanently engraved in my memory, the Reichs and the Polaks, at whose places I used to eat ?teg? during the school year. This means that they used to feed me one day a week. They liked me and treated me in the best possible way. They never made me feel like I was dependent on them. Their attitude towards me molded my character. Mrs. Reich has remained in my memories my whole life as Auntie Zelma, and her older son, my friend Erisko. Mrs. Polakova

was Auntie Sidi and her son Arnold our 'son,' whom my wife and I took in after the war. Arnold was a very spoiled child. For example, when he didn't like the soup, he'd put a hair in it and proclaim, 'I don't want soup that has a hair in it.' They gave him a different soup, he took a fly from the flypaper and threw it in it, so that he'd have a reason to rebel. One evening his parents sent for me. Arnold had enraged his father so much that he would have given him a severe beating. As he was afraid of being beaten, he ran away from home. Of course, eventually night came, and the boy wasn't home. He liked me, so his parents sent for me, for me to bring him back home. They knew in which direction he'd gone. I went in that direction and found him. He was already returning slowly, step by step. We arrived in front of their house, and he didn't want to go another step further, he was afraid. I told him, 'Well, let's not sit here all night, you know, I've got to go to school in the morning.' He didn't want to go home. I told him, 'All right, I'll make you a bed in the stable.' I fixed him a bed from a blanket that was used to cover horses. That was too smelly for him. Finally I got him into his room. I put his pajamas on him, and in the meantime his father had calmed down. His parents were very good to me. By coincidence, that's how life wanted it, Arnold's parents died during the war. He remained alone, and so my wife and I took him in as our own son. A beautiful relationship, which had already been growing from youth, developed between us. After the war he studied at a mechanical tech school in Kosice. Then he wanted at all costs to go see the world. In the end, though, he listened and after tech school also finished university in Prague. Then he moved to the USA, where he worked his way up to being a university professor. He currently lives in Cincinnati. My wife and I have been there to visit him.