

Nehemia Ril And Members Of The Management Of Plunge Jewish Community



This is the management of Plunge Jewish community - my uncle Nehemia Ril is the third to the left in the front. Pharmacist Rimani is the third sitting, next to him is entrepreneur Goldwasser. To the right is Chasia Gamsul. Jewish school teacher Moiskiy is 4th to the left in the top row. All of them perished in occupation. The picture was made in Plunge in middle 1930.

I was born in Plunge. I have lived here all life long. My cognates lived in Plunge 400 years ago. Grandmother said that her parents, whose name I cannot recall, were rather well-off. They had their own bakery. Besides, great grandfather was also a rather good tailor. Their daughter- my grandmother Golda Kagan- also worked all her life. My grandfather Mende Ril was a trader and grandmother helped him. Both of them were born in Plunge in middle 1870s. Mother said that one of the things she remembered from childhood was when the parents processed flax, and it was their main business. She helped them standing on the stool to be able to reach the processing machine. The clients who came over to her parents, treated her with sweets. Grandfather was also a tailor and a baker. Grandparents owned a small bakery. When I was a child I remember that grandmother sold grain and grandpa was a gabe in a local synagogue. He was almost blind. Grandparents had their own house. Even now it is in the heart of Plunge, where old houses are preserved.

My mother's brother Nehemia Ril, whom we called Chema was several years younger than mother. He was a respectable man in Plunge. He was a goldsmith, he had his own workshop and a store. He was rather rich. His family- wife Channa and son Nisan had all they wanted. Chema was an activist, he was the chairman of the Jewish health council. Chema and his family did not manage to get evacuated. When the Great Patriotic War began, all of them were murdered by fascists with the remaining Jews in Plunge.

Our family was of the largest in Plunge. There was one poor man who had 11 kids, who were constantly hungry. We were neither poor nor rich. We were helped a lot by mother's brother Nehemia.

At that time the population of town was 2 thousand people, more than a half were Jews. Many of them were arrested by the Soviet regime in 1941 and deported in Siberia, having saved their lives that way. Those who stayed in town during the first days of occupation, were executed by fascist beasts. All Plunge Jews were religious Jews, irrespective of the extent, they all observed traditions.

There were several synagogues in town. There was a large and beautiful one, where all Jews came on holidays, and two more large synagogues, and 4 small ones. There was also undertakers' bureau belonging to Chevr Kadish. Jews also were charitable, and grandpa Mende was the heart of the charity fund. Rich Jews paid money in that committee and then allocated them to poor families for the poor Jews to be able to mark Sabbath, holidays or just have something to eat. Poor brides were also helped to get married. Poor Jews were also buried on charity money. There were 'official' paupers in Plunge who asked for alms. For them not to be a disgrace for the Jews, they were distributed among the rich who took care of them. The owner of the rich house let some back with the necessary things in the house and the 'attached' poor man came over to get that bag and money to certain house. Nobody stole anything, and besides poor people were exempt from constant humiliation that way. That committee also took care of the collection money for Palestine.