

Noemi Korsan-Ekert And Her Mother Salomea Sara Drucker



This is me. The photo was taken in Boryslaw in the 1920s.

This is one of the photographies I got from my cousin Howard. Howard (Hagaj) Gelb was the son of Simcha, my mother's eldest brother. Howard was born in Poland; in 1926 he emigrated with his parents to the United States. 10 years ago he came back to Poland the country of his childhood. We were together for several days and I became very close to him. When Howard went back to the States, among the family papers he found photographs of my family and sent them to me. These are the only pre-war photographs I have. The rest was lost.

Even though my family was non-religious, I participated in Jewish religion classes. There were no people without faith then. Both in elementary school and later, religion classes were compulsory and organized by faith: Roman-Catholic, Greco-Catholic and Jewish.

I can't remember the name of our teacher from elementary school; in secondary school we studied with Mr. Langerman. The teacher would come and tell us about the history of the Jews and about the events that we celebrate during holidays. The class started and ended with a prayer in Polish; in the school where my parents taught, the prayer was said in Hebrew. I found these classes incredibly boring. As soon as spring came I would cut school.

In my elementary school the day would start at 8am with a prayer. This was not a Jewish school, so a Catholic prayer was said, 'Our Father.' Jewish children would simply get up and not say anything. But they participated in that.

Once, already in secondary school, I went to a catholic religion class. The priest in my school was very fond of me – he'd always pinch my cheeks – and once he invited me to his classes. There were prayers in those classes and stories told about miracles. I remember that once they talked a lot about the Mother of God. I enjoyed that very much. I visited those classes two, three times. I never told my parents, because I felt that it was a faux pas of sorts, that I did something inappropriate.

I went to the Private Co-Educational Secondary School for the Humanities in Boryslaw. The school was located on Pod Lasem Street. I can't remember its name, but next to the Tarbut school and commerce school it was the only such school in town. It was an extremely modern school. The language of instruction was Polish. The building was financed by the community. It had a huge garden where botany classes were held. We were taught to distinguish various types of plants.

At school there were several workshops: for physics, bookbinding, handicrafts. Really, for those times, that was a very well-equipped school; the staff was excellent, almost all teachers had PhDs. Among the students there were both Catholics and Jews. Tuition was very high – 50-60 zlotys – which amounted to one white-collar salary or two worker's salaries. I got 50 percent discount because I was a teachers' daughter.