

Jojne Hus With Sons



This is Jojne Hus with his sons. I don't know their names (editors note: This photo depicts my father, David Huss, standing on the left, Tobe Schvach, no relation, standing on the right, who became some kind of ambassador, and seated, my grandfather, Yona Huss. My father, David, just died about six weeks ago. Submitted by Fred Huss, 05.2016). They came back after the war from Russia. Before the war they lived in Horodenka. They were not my friends. I don't think I met them before the war. But after the war... There were so few of us, citizens of Horodenka.

I think that before World War II in Horodenka and on the outskirts of the town there must have been between 4,000 and 4,500 Jews. Not all of them were artisans; there were a few farmers and

petty merchants, who didn't live on the Jewish streets. The whole town numbered 10,000-12,000 citizens. About 3,000-3,500 Ukrainians lived on the outskirts; only the Ukrainian intelligentsia lived in the town itself - doctors, teachers and lawyers. And there were more or less 2,500-3,000 Poles: all the administrative posts, schools, all the civil servants.

There were a lot of Zionist organizations, in fact all the parties were represented in the town. Hashomer Hatzair was strong. I don't remember Betar. There was Left Poalei Zion and Keren Kayemet. Not far from our house a Bund club was under construction for many years, a huge building where the Jewish school, Yidishe Shul, was later. During the period of Soviet rule the Bund was disbanded, and its activists arrested, deported, and never heard of again. And the school was converted into the town club. I remember that there was a small Jewish hotel in our town, run by a real dragon. Miserable rooms, they were. All that was on the main street. And not far away was the Orthodox church and the Hebrew school.

In the run-up to 1st May the artisans and workers held illegal demonstrations, but there was never an official one - that was banned. Even the Polish socialists, I mean the members of the Polish Socialist Party, if they went out on a demonstration, were only given permission on a certain street. On the whole the Jews didn't get involved. The Bundists avoided demonstrations too, because they knew that the Endeks or the anti-Semites would attack them. There were various incidents. Some people, the Jewish youths from Zukunft, for instance, or from the Zionist parties, would put stones into old tights and whirl them around like a club. That was how they defended themselves against the Endek hit squads. In any case, the police always arrested the leading activists before 1st May.

If 3rd May celebrations were held [the anniversary of the signing of the Polish constitution in 1793], we children, Jewish, Polish and Ukrainian, went on marches with our schools. Our teacher, Smiechowski, was the leader of a branch of the Riflemen. He always walked at the head, with his saber, and we admired him, because he looked wonderful in his uniform. But Endek groups would attack the Jews. So the Jewish youths began to organize vigilante groups and there were often skirmishes and arrests.