

Chasia Spanerflig With Her Brother Jeshua Langbord



This is me, Chasia Langbord with my brother Jeshua Langbord. The picture was taken on 12th May 1930 in Zdzisiot.

I was born in the small town of Zdzisiot, which until 1939 belonged to the Polish province Grodnensk, before the division of Polish territory by Germany. Now it is called Dyatlovoo and belongs to Grodno region, Belarus. My maiden name is Langbord. It means 'long beard' in Yiddish.

In accordance with the family legend all males in our kin had long beards, which was one of the attributes of religious Jews. There were synagogue gabbaim, interpreters of the Torah and rabbis among my ancestors. In short, they were revered in the Jewish world.

Grandfather Velvl's house was in the center of the town. The house was well-built, but not very large. The housekeeper always used to cook something in the kitchen. She was Belarusian. She taught my brother and me a couple of phrases in her mother tongue. My parents spoke Yiddish with us and between themselves, though Father was fluent in Hebrew. My grandparents' house was always teeming with people as they were involved in social work. My brother and I were on our own or with our housekeeper. My parents were constantly busy.

I got my first Jewish education in a Jewish kindergarten. There we, the little kids, were told about Israel. Zionist ideas were inoculated in a simplified form. Thus, I have been a Zionist since childhood. We used to dance and sing different songs like in any kindergarten.

There were three schools in the town – a Polish school, a Yiddish school and the Tarbut. I entered the latter when I was six. The school was secular, but it had its own traditions. We were taught the main rules of our religion. My father taught that subject. The classes were held in Hebrew. We studied Jewish literature, mostly Bialik's poetry. We also had a subject of Polish language and literature. I was involved in social life: I sang in the school choir, took part in the performances of the drama studio. In general, my school years were wonderful. I remember how we used to go to school on a sleigh drawn by three horses. It was a sleigh's race and we, robust and red-hot, were singing Polish and Jewish songs.