

Russian Orthodox Church In The Jewish Borough Yanovichi, Where Blyuma Perlstein Lived



On this picture you can see the Russian Orthodox Church in the Jewish borough Yanovichi. This drawing is from the year 1926.

The Yanovichi settlement, where I was born, was located 30 kilometers from Vitebsk. It was a very cultural place, since literate and intelligent Jews and Russians lived there. Before and after the Revolution all children, both Jewish and Russian, went to school together and I never heard the word 'anti-Semitism,' because we all lived in friendship. Only the Kolonitsky family stood out. It was a Russian family of intellectuals and three people from this family were our teachers: two women and one man, Alexey Yakovlevich, thanks to whom we have the possibility to remember Yanovichi, looking at pictures made from his drawings.

Alexey Yakovlevich also taught me drawing, history, mathematics and physics. He lived the last years of his life in Moscow. My brother Aron also lived there and they kept in touch with each other. Alexey Yakovlevich gave all the pictures made from drawings, which he drew in Yanovichi, to my brother. My brother Aron died in 1977 and I inherited all these pictures.

There was a beautiful Russian Orthodox Church in the middle of the settlement close to the market square. It was used for weddings and prayers. Sometimes children came inside to watch a wedding or some other ceremony. The settlement, the market square and nice houses, where not very rich but well-to-do and rather prosperous people lived, were located around the church. There was also a big park not far from it. A big wooden bridge led to the church across the Vymnyanka River. There was a street which led past the estate of the former Polish landowner, ex-owner of the

Yanovichi borough, to Vitebsk. After the Revolution this manor served the Yanovichi population. A kindergarten was arranged in one of the buildings. I attended that kindergarten. Mostly craftsmen lived in that street behind the bridge. Every evening young people gathered on the bridge to spend their free time, especially on holidays and weekends. We had real fun.