

Elementary School In Bodzentyn



This is my old school in Bodzentyn. It is an elementary school. I took this photo during my trip to Bodzentyn after World War II, in 1957.

I remember this elementary school with nostalgia. The principal's name was Pastula; his wife taught me Polish. I remember this one incident connected with school: we were not wealthy, so Father cut our hair with scissors at home and, of course, he didn't cut very evenly. One day, when Father was cutting my hair he cut off one of my side locks, I quickly covered the other one with my hand and didn't let him cut that one off. Of course, these weren't long and curly side locks that Hasidim have, but short ones. Religion says that when the time for harvest comes, you shouldn't cut everything, but leave something on the field. And, supposedly, this is where these side locks come from. I went to school. I was in second grade then. In class Mrs. Pastula noticed my hair and asked: 'And what is this supposed to be? Here it's cut and here it isn't.' So I told her that my father cut my hair like this and that I didn't let him cut it on the other side. So she told me that if I didn't make my hair even on both sides, she wouldn't let me graduate. I was very pious then, I went to cheder. And there was no other way, I had to repeat the second grade. But later I knew everything and I was the best student.

Jewish and Polish children attended this elementary school together. Jews weren't taught religion there. We would leave during the first lesson, because that was usually Catholic religion. So then we moved out of the way, went to the school ballground and roughhoused there. We studied Polish, mathematics, geography and calligraphy, and there was singing, drawing and gymnastics. In the sixth grade I dropped out of school at the end of the school year, because our entire family left for Lodz in 1933.