

Saturday's Cleaning In The Jewish Hostel In Dzierzoniow



This is me, Felix Nieznanowski, with Jewish youth in Dzierzoniow. The picture was taken shortly after the war, in the 1940s, during the Saturday's cleaning in the Jewish hostel.

I returned to Poland in one of the [repatriation] transports, it was February 1946, arriving in a place called Rychbach, Reichenbach in German, Dzierzoniów in Polish. When we arrived, I looked around; it was full of Jews, hustle and bustle like before the war on Nalewki! And I stood there with my wooden suitcase, dressed in the Soviet-style quilted work jacket. I went to the Jewish Committee on Daszynskiego Street. there was a huge crowd in front of it, people had arrived in town and are waiting for lodgings, for food, because they had emerged within nothing from the train. I couldn't push through. Eventually I got through to the secretary, her name was Siedlecka, and I said to her, in Russian, I remember, 'Mrs. Siedlecka, my name is Nieznanowski.' She says, 'Oh, Nieznanowski, you must be his brother?' And my brother entered the room. We burst into tears. We hadn't seen each other since 1941. He says, 'Take these keys, there's an apartment, go there, I can't leave the office right now. You'll find some clothes there, get dressed.'

I entered the apartment, looked around – and there were swastikas, all kinds of German clothes. I opened the drawer – there's a gun. But, most importantly, there was a bathroom! A coal-fired stove. I fired under that stove, took a bath, dressed into those shorts, the lederhosen, and turned into something of a German boy. I went to the train station, and there stands the car in which I arrived. I say, 'What are you waiting here for, come on, let's go!' 'No, we're supposed to go to Klodzko.' So I said to them, 'We're not going to Klodzko, this is where we'll stay!' And they got off. The whole chevra [group], I have them in the photos here.