

Salomea Sara Drucker



This is my mother Salomea Sara Drucker, nee Gelb, Presser in her first marriage. The photo was taken in Boryslaw (today Ukraine) in the 1920s.

This is one of the photograph's I got from my cousin Howard. Howard (Hagaj) Gelb was the son of Simcha, my mother's eldest brother. Howard was born in Poland; in 1926 he emigrated with his parents to the United States. Ten years ago he came back to Poland, the country of his childhood. We were together for several days and I became very close to him. When Howard went back to the States, among the family papers he found photographs of my family and sent them to me. These are the only pre-war photographs I have. The rest was lost.

After graduation my mother went to Lwow where her brother Simcha lived at the time. It was under his influence that she became interested in Zionism. But there was still a lot of the socialist in her; for example, she was an ardent atheist. Oh, she always expressed radical views. Simcha was lay, practical, very educated, but my mother was much more expressive, more dynamic than he was.

As a Zionist, my mother started teaching in the Tarbut school which he ran in Lwow. Markus Presser – a Zionist with a passion for German literature and linguistics – also taught at the school. Soon they were married. That was in 1920.

The Tarbut school in Boryslaw, where my parents worked, had only six grades, when a full school should have eight. On graduating from the last grade one could continue education in other public schools. There were seven teachers on the staff. Since Saturdays were free, not only children of

local Zionists, but also children from religious – though not zealously orthodox – families studied there. At the same time, the school drew children who may have been ostracized in Polish schools because of the political views of their parents, mostly those with communist leanings.

There were about 10-12 students in each grade. The school was co-educational. All students were Jewish. Many subjects were taught related to Jewish history and culture, where the language of instruction was Hebrew. History began with ancient Israel and was taught mostly based on the Torah. My mom taught grammar and contemporary Hebrew literature. My dad taught Hebrew. When my Uncle Simcha emigrated to the United States in 1926, my father became the principal of the school.

My parents were the first decidedly non-religious generation in my family. My house was not kosher. We basically didn't celebrate holidays. During the holidays my parents usually went to Lwow to visit their friends. I went with them once, but otherwise I stayed with Aunt Goldzia who married a mercer's shop owner and lived in Boryslaw.