

Hana Rayzberg's Pupil's Certificate



This is a page from my pupil's certificate. I finished the 6th grade and passed to the 7th grade. I'm wearing the school uniform of our Jewish school. However, I never continued my studies due to the war. This photo was taken in 1941 in Ludza.

I finished the Jewish school and passed exams to the Latvia gymnasium, the only possible option in Ludza. All subjects were taught in Latvian, and it was difficult for me. We also studied Latin, German and English. I was good at foreign languages. I was also very fond of chemistry. I was thinking of continuing my studies after school to become an interpreter or a teacher, but this was not to be.

Hitler's coming to power in Germany affected Latvia as well. Anti-Semitism emerged after the coup in 1934. There were only five Jewish students in the gymnasium: four girls and one boy. His name was Hertz Frank. He became a documentary film producer. All of us came to the gymnasium after finishing the Jewish school. We had double names, and these names were listed in the class register. Usually teachers called us by one name, while our history teacher used to call us by our double names emphasizing on the foreign pronunciation of our second names. He kind of segregated us from other students. We also studied religion in the gymnasium. Jewish students had their own teacher. I don't know whether he was a rabbi, but we studied the Torah and Talmud with him.

In 1940 Latvia was annexed to the USSR. The Soviet authorities closed the Jewish school in Ludza. Our gymnasium became a Latvian general education school. We started studying the history of the USSR. My friends used to visit me in the evenings and our tenants joined us for an evening. We were flattered by this attention the officers in their uniforms showed us. They told us about the USSR and their life. Sometimes they sang Russian songs, and one of them played the accordion.