

Mieczyslaw Weinryb With Colleagues



This is a picture of me (third from left) with a teacher's group in Lublin. The photo was taken in 1946. In 1945 I was in Bashkiria in the Soviet Union. Towards the end of the war news started to reach us from Poland. Some people left. When they came back we asked them, 'Well, and how is it with bread, what kind of rations?' They said that there were no rations, that goods were in the shops on the shelves and you could take as much as you wanted, that there were even cakes there. But we had become so used to the reality of life out there by that time that we didn't believe them, we simply couldn't imagine it. We left in fall 1945. After a few weeks traveling in goods trains I arrived in Lublin. I didn't meet anyone of my family in Lublin. Later I found out that Awigdor, my uncle's son, and his two sisters had survived. They left for Israel straight after the war. Later they moved to Canada, and then the girls went to the US, to Boston. Some time ago we lost contact with them. After I returned from the Soviet Union I started work in the Jewish school of the Central Committee of Polish Jews. I taught Polish. It was a small school; there were about 30 pupils. I remember that we had a Jewish boy whose mother had taken him back from a convent. The problem was that the boy was very small, only a few years old, so he had become very attached to the nuns in the convent and had forgotten his mother. We all tried to comfort the woman somehow, but she was always crying and cuddling her son. Towards the end of the school year, in 1947, I left for Warsaw. Here I met my friend Weiner, who had come from Paris, engineer Slobodkin, with whom I had been in Bashkiria, and others. I worked in the Central Jewish Committee [CJC] as a construction technician. The first house that I rebuilt was in Praga [a district of Warsaw]. It had been a Jewish house, and after we had finished work on it some Jewish families moved into it. Later on some of the tenants left the country and some moved out. I also worked on the rebuilding of the house on 28 Jagiellonska Street. That was another commission from the CJC. On the ground floor of that house was a shop that sold kosher meat. I can't remember when it closed down.