Solotvin - Jews in the 19th - early 20th centuries

   Community: Solotvyn

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In the nineteenth century, the Solotvin Jews made a living mainly from small businesses and craftsmanship. Jews lived mainly in the center of the town and suffered greatly from the fire of 1888 in which some 600 houses were burnt (Pinkas Kehilot, 350).

A state-run school was established in Solotvin in 1804 (link). In the 1880s, there existed a state-run two-grade school (Słownik, 11:66).

A vocational school for Jews was established by the Baron Hirsch foundation in 1894 and existed until World War I (*Ha-magid*, no. 30, 26 July 1900, p. 349; *Ha-magid, no. 22, 6 June 1901*, p. 247; Pinkas Kehilot, 350).

In the 1890s, two fires undermined the economic stability of the town. Many Solotvin Jews began to work in the ozocerite mines in the surroundings villages Dzwiniacz, Starunic, Molotkow as supervisors and as miners. However, the economic crisis of 1899 caused the closure of the mines, and many Jewish workers became unemployed. A "Committee for Supporting the Unemployed Jewish Workers of the Dzwiniacz, Starunic, Molotkow ozocerite Mines" was established and it appealed for help to the broader Jewish public (*Die Welt*, no. 26, 30 June 1899, p. 12).

On June 14, 1903, a service for the victims of the Kishinev pogrom was held in the town's synagogue. It was accompanied by a choir of the students from the Baron Hirsch school. The school's director, Händler, gave a speech, comparing the recent pogrom with the Khmelnitsky massacre of the seventeenth century. Jewish businesses in the town were closed on that day (*Die Welt*, no. 26, 26 June 1903, p. 9).

A private school for teaching Hebrew was opened in Solotvin in 1906-07 by the association "Safah Brurah" (Pure Language). In 1911, there were 100 students and one teacher, Michael Kleiner (*Gelber, Toldot*, 2:726; cf. 712).

Another Hebrew school was established in the same year by the local committee of the Austrian Hebrew Teachers Association; there were 46 students in 1911, who were taught by the same teacher Michael Kleiner (*Gelber, Toldot*, 2:727).

The Russian occupation during World War I in 1914-1915 was harmful to the Jewish community. As a result, almost all Jewish homes destroyed, much property was stolen and several Jews were killed by Russian soldiers (Pinkas Kehilot, 350).

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