

The Interviewee, His Sister And Brother



This photograph was taken in Yanovichi in 1929 not long before we left Liozno. Here it's time to tell you about our life after departure.

When I was 6 years old (in 1930), we moved to the city of Liozno. Liozno was a regional center and a large railway junction. There my father was offered to work at a supplying center. But parents also had an idea to give their children opportunity to study somewhere. Probably, it was not so pleasant for sisters of my father (by that time they were no more young) that he left parents: they got used to the fact that my father and Mum took care of their parents. By the way, one of my father's sisters Sifra and her husband lived in Liozno. By the moment of our leaving for Liozno we were already a family of 6.

After Yanovichi Liozno seemed to us almost Paris. All the streets were paved - this fact shocked me. At first we had no place for living. But later aunt Sifra and her family moved to Leningrad, and we lodged in her house. Her house was small and not very comfortable, therefore father dreamed to move to more suitable lodging. Soon we managed to buy our own house. It was situated not in the most Jewish district of the city, our neighbors were mainly Russians. Parents were always in good relations with neighbors: as they say, they did not argue about borders, but inter nos they spoke about neighbors not always respectfully.

Our house was not very big (we had not enough money for a bigger one), but for us it was cozy and quiet. There was stove heating and no water supply. Electricity supply appeared much later.

We had a large vegetable garden, a cow and hens. Later we even bought a pig, but only to plump it for sale (at home we never ate pork). When I grew up, it came to my mind that probably parents

bought a pig to show the neighbors that they were not very religious Jews. You see, by that time Soviet authority already started struggle against religion, and it was possible to expect troubles.

When my younger brother grew up a little, Mum started working as a saleswoman in a food store. We all kept the house together. Each of us (children) had a certain task about the house, and I don't remember that some of us failed to fulfill it.

Two or three of father's cousins lived in Liozno. We made friends with their children.

At home we had a lot of religious books and not many books of other kind. Most often books were brought home by my sister, who studied at a Belarus school. Her books were in Belarussian language. Later I started borrowing books at our school library.

Among us my sister was the most sociable and active. My elder brother was very clever and capable, he had pronounced aptitude for engineering. I also was not a fool, but very silent, therefore some people thought that I was unsociable. When Mum went to Torgsin stores to sell something, she took me with her, because she was sure that I would tell nobody about it. By the way, Mum never went to Torgsin stores in our city, we always went to the neighboring one. That was the way I went by train for the first time in my life. And by car I went for the first time very late in my life: probably already in the army. By the way, if we speak about technical achievements, I'd like to tell you that in our class only one boy had watches. Almost all teachers asked him 'What time is it now?' They had no watches.

In 1933 in Ukraine people were starving. We got to know about it, because in our city there appeared refugees from Ukraine, extremely famished. At our city it was a little bit better, but we had food card. People stood in lines to buy bread, and the ration decreased day by day. If we had no vegetable garden, we would not survive. We had to buy hay for our cow, and it was also not easy, because only a few owners sold it: every person keeping a cow wanted to keep hay.