

Alexandr Nepomniaschy



I, Alexandr (Shaya) Nepomniaschy, born in 1910. I'm 20 years old.

My name is Alexandr Borisovich Nepomniaschy. I was born on 20 September 1910 in the Jewish town of Dmitrovka Elisavetgrad province (Kirovograd region after the revolution), Ukraine. At my birth I was given the name of Shaya.

I'm almost 92 years old now.

We rented an apartment in the center of Kirovograd. My father worked as a blacksmith. I went to the cheder when I was 8. Cheder was only for boys and my sisters didn't go there. Our teacher was teaching us to read and write in Yiddish and Hebrew. We studied arithmetic and knew our prayers by heart. When I reached 13 I had Barmitsva at the synagogue.

I became a pioneer at school - we were called young Leninists. I studied successfully. There were children of various nationalities at school, but I didn't know any difference between a Jew and non-Jew then. We were friends, played football, went tobogganing in winter and swimming in the river in summer. There was no national segregation. At home we lived our routinely life celebrating Jewish holidays, going to the synagogue and celebrating birthdays. However, I didn't observe Jewish traditions any more. They convinced me at school that there was no God and that religion was vestige of the past. After finishing school at 16 I entered the Jewish College in 1926. Besides academic subjects we also studied profession. Teaching was in Yiddish. I got the profession of a turner. I also became a Komsomol member at College. After finishing this College I got a job at the Kirovograd agricultural machine building plant. I was 19 years old then.

I decided to go to Leningrad. I was a Komsomol member and sent me to work as a turner at the military plant "Bolshevik". I had good performance records and was a Komsomol activist I sincerely believed in the idea of building communism in the whole world. In 1931 I became a member of the Communist party. I agreed and was admitted to the Mechanic Engineering department at the Leningrad Mining Institute without having to pass any exams in 1931. I lived at the hostel of this Institute. About half of students and lecturers at the Institute were Jewish. There was no national segregation between us. There was no anti-Semitism at all at that time. I graduated from the Institute with honors in 1936 when I was 26.