

Faina Saushkina



This is I, Faina Glezer, photographed at a Photoshop in Slavuta on the occasion of finishing school in 1933.

In 1924 I went to a Jewish lower secondary school. It had the same curriculum as Ukrainian schools. We studied mathematic, geography, history and Ukrainian language and literature. The only difference was that we studied in Yiddish. We didn't study Jewish literature or history. In the 3rd form I became a pioneer. I liked wearing a pioneer necktie, attending meetings and singing new songs. We had meetings on 1 May, 7 November. We didn't celebrate Soviet holidays at home. Only my hospitable mother always made pies and cakes for our friends and us.

I had many friends: Fania, a Jew, Ivanka, a Ukrainian girl, Stefka, a Polish girl, and others. We never heard words like "zhydy" or "moskali" - slang name of Russians. We never paid any attention to nationality issues. We spent a lot of time at the town Palace of pioneers attending clubs - I attended choir classes. I sang in a choir where we sang Ukrainian, Russian and Jewish songs. There were also technical and literature club, dancing and music classes. , On holidays my friends and I went to walk in the central park.

In the 7th form I became a Komsomol member without giving it much thought. All children were enthusiastic about membership in Komsomol - we believed our country to be the best in the world and wanted to contribute into its prosperity. 1932 was a period of famine in Ukraine. I didn't see dying people in our town, but there were many starved. We had a hard time, too. However, our mother was very handy with cooking and we did not starve. She made mamalyga [corn flour meal], soup and pancakes from potato peels. Our mother baked the beetroots in the oven.

Our family still had a hard time and after finishing school I went to look for a job. I was 17 years old. I came to the Komsomol district committee and they sent me to a 6-month training course of

teachers at kindergarten. After finishing this course I began to work at a Jewish kindergarten. I enjoyed my work: I liked children and enjoyed teaching them Jewish songs, dances and poems.

At leisure time my friends and I went to dancing parties and sang in a choir - we sang popular Jewish and Soviet songs. Once the district Komsomol committee sent us to a frontier unit in Slavuta where I met my future husband. We conducted meetings dedicated to memorable dates, recited poems and sang. Once our neighbor Manya Vinokur that lived in another half of our house came to our house. She told me that a guy wanted to meet me. He saw me several times during our performances at the frontier unit, but dared not to approach me.