

Bertha Trachtenbroit And Her Brother Leonid Trachtenberg



My brother Leonid and I in Odessa in September, 1933. The photo was made on the occasion of the start of an academic year at school.

I went to a Ukrainian secondary school (which also included an elementary school) in 1932. I could read and write then. My brother studied at this school. When he was to go to school in 1929 he was offered to go to a Jewish school, but our mother understood that it was advisable to go to a Russian or Ukrainian school if someone wanted to continue his studies. Teaching in higher educational institutions was conducted in Russian and Ukrainian. Besides, my brother didn't know Yiddish - he did not spend as much time with my aunts as I did. My mother went to the district department of education and they suggested that he went to a Ukrainian school. That was how he went to this Ukrainian school. It was a very good school.

Our teachers were very good. I was one of the best pupils there. I remember my first teacher Matryona Illarionovna Khomenko, a Ukrainian. I also remember our German teacher Bertha Israilevna. She was a Jew. I remember Boris Zdanevich, our teacher of the Ukrainian language and literature. I enjoyed studying and have very pleasant memories of the years I spent at school. I liked Ukrainian language and literature classes best of all. I became a pioneer and then a Komsomol (17) member at school. I was never really active socially and I tried to participate in the pioneer and Komsomol activities only formally. I preferred to stay at home and read books.