

Leonid Dusman And His Brother Boris Dusman



This is a picture of me and my older brother, Boris Dusman, at the seashore in Odessa. The photo was taken in 1936. Family life was the highest value for my parents. They had a summerhouse, which was a wooden house on the territory of the Lermontov Recreation Center, where my father worked. [The recreation center was located within the city boundaries, 20 minutes on foot from Leonid's house.] My father and some other doctors were allowed to build small houses for their families to rest in summer. My parents took us to the summer house every year because they believed it was good for us. We stayed at the seashore during the whole summer vacations. My father liked to go fishing on the weekends. My mother cooked for the family. She let me go to the beach with my brother. He taught me to swim and dive. We liked swimming and sunbathing. We returned to the town before another academic year began. My brother studied at a school, which was formerly the grammar school of the Efrussi brothers. It was a Russian grammar school. I also went to this school, which was my parents' decision, although there was a Jewish school nearby. It was easier to continue education after finishing a Russian school because all higher educational institutions were Russian. I have bright memories of my father taking me home from kindergarten. We rode on a horse-driven cart from the Lermontov Recreation Center. This cart used to take the staff of the center home. To make me enjoy the ride the most I was allowed to sit on the coach-box and hold the reins. I was very proud of it. My father loved Odessa and told me a lot about the neighborhoods we passed. Another memory of my childhood is how our parents educated my brother Boris and me. Every Sunday the whole family sat down for dinner. My father liked borsch [Ukrainian traditional cabbage and beet soup] so there was borsch, brown bread, garlic and a decanter of vodka on the table. He liked to have a shot of vodka before dinner, took some garlic afterwards and ate hot borsch. He never forgot that we were watching him. My brother was seven years older than I, and my father gave him a few drops of vodka because he thought 'a son should get to know about things from his father'. Boris and my father clinked their glasses and drank vodka. I kept staring at them, wondering why it was that they could have what I couldn't? My father

decided to show me there was nothing to be jealous about. He dipped a piece of brown bread in vodka and gave it to me. I got so sick - I was just ten years old then.