

Dina Orlova



This is a picture of me at the age of 5. The photo was taken in Ozarintsy in 1938. I was born in 1933. My father named me Dina after his mother. I was eager to go to school. There was a Jewish elementary school in Ozarintsy. When my brother started to go to school I went with him. The teacher sent me home telling me that I was too young to go to school. I went to Uncle Mordkhe. He didn't have any children and was always happy to see me. Mordkhe had a good education. He knew Hebrew very well, so he began to teach me Hebrew. My mother got rather scared when she heard about it because the Soviet authorities persecuted such activities [during their struggle against religion]. My mother forbade me to study Hebrew. I wish she hadn't. I learned to read and write in Yiddish instead. My parents spoke Yiddish in the family. We communicated in Yiddish with Jewish children and in Ukrainian with our Ukrainian neighbors' children. I was admitted to the Jewish elementary school at the age of 6 1/2 although the standard age was 8. It was an ordinary school except that all subjects were taught in Yiddish. We didn't study Hebrew or religion. I liked

studying and was successful at school. We studied general subjects and were also taught moral principles. Our teacher came to the children's homes to check if a pupil helped his parents about the house. We had wonderful teachers! We attended a biology club under the supervision of our teacher Krivitskiy. We went to the woods to have practical classes. I was an industrious pupil. When I was in the 1st grade our teacher gave us books to read during the week and talk about its contents afterwards. I knew these books by heart. We often visited my grandmother and grandfather in Murafa. My brother and I spent our vacations there. I always looked forward to these trips. I had many friends in Murafa. I was a naughty girl, I liked climbing trees and ride horses, which were at the collective farm. Sometimes we were riding to the lake with my father.