

Faina Volper



I am a pupil of the first form of secondary school in Starokonstantinov town. Photo made after the meeting dedicated to the anniversary of Lenin's death where I recited a poem about Lenin.

I went to school in 1933 when I was 6 years old. I wanted to go to school, even though I was too young for it. I had a friend - Sopha Galperina. She was one year older than I and it was time for her to go to school. I missed her and kept nagging about her letting me go to school. My mother and I went to director of the Ukrainian school. When he heard that I was 6 years old he told me to come to school in another year. We went home, but I lost appetite and my mother became very concerned about it. She promised me to let me go to school with Sopha if I ate my breakfast promptly. During classes I stayed outside waiting for an interval when I could play with other children. Once a teacher noticed that I was outside the classroom. She asked me what I was doing there and I told her honestly that I was eager to study. She asked me whether I could read and write. I knew letters and could read. She checked what I knew and took me to the class. There were long desks for 10 pupils in this class. The teacher gave me a sheet of paper and a pencil. I did everything other pupils did. Perhaps, I was not so good at it, but I enjoyed going to school. My teacher talked to director to give me a chance at school and he agreed. By the end of the first form I had the best grades. There were 5 or 6 Ukrainian children in my class and the rest of us were Jewish children. We studied all subjects in Ukrainian.

When I was in the first form in 1933 we had a meeting dedicated to an anniversary of Lenin's death. I went to school with Sopha and her mother. I had a big ribbon in my hair. My mother taught me a poem "Hard sorrow" about Lenin's death. Sopha's mother put me on a chair on the stage and announced that I would recite a poem. I recited it pathetically and was a great success. People applauded me for a long time.

I became a young Octobrist and then a pioneer at school. I took it very seriously.

I remember how happy I was to become a pioneer. We became pioneers at school on the birthday of Lenin in April at age of 10 years. Senior pioneers tied red neckties on us and we pronounced a pioneer oath. I saluted everybody on this day.

I was a very shy girl and as quiet as a mouse. However, I took an active part in public life of our school. I was a senior pioneer in my class and later became a member of the pupil's committee at school. I was a disciplined pupil and believed it to be my duty to participate in all pioneer activities.

I got along well with my schoolmates, but had one close friend - Sarrah Kaluzhnaya she was Jewish girl.

I didn't have to spend much time doing my homework. I remembered all I heard in class. I always had the highest grades at school. I had a lot of free time and decided to study music. I had classes with a private teacher, our neighbor. We didn't have a piano. My father was reluctant to buy one. Those were fearful years and he wanted to be no different from other people. It was better to attract no attention of other people anything that might cause interest or envy. I had classes at my teacher's home. Later my class tutor Sophia Efimovna became my teacher. We had a piano in our class.