

Elizaveta Dubinskya With Her Brother Leonid And Sister Maria.



From left to right: I - Yelizaveta, my brother Leonid and sister Maria Dubinskies. The photo was made in 1934 in Kiev and sent "to sister Roza, brother-in-law Johan, and our dear niece Yenichka".

My name is Yelizaveta Dubinskaya. I was born with this last name; this is my father's last name.

I was born in Kiev, or to be more precise, Kiev's suburb, Slobodka, on the Pushkinskaya Street. I was born on May 12, 1922.

I was the fifth and the youngest child in our family. My eldest brother was Yakov, he was born in 1911; then brother Leonid was born in 1914, then sisters: elder - Rozalia, born in 1908, and Maria, born in 1919. Elder sister Rozalia went to a Jewish school, while Maria went to a Ukrainian school (she started in the Jewish school, and after two or three years there our parents decided that she should better study in a Ukrainian school; many did so back then.)

Our brothers were much older than me, so in my childhood I played and made friends mostly with Maria because we were the closest in age.

I don't remember our house very well. It was a flat bought by my grandfather. We had three rooms.

We had an average income. We never starved, but neither were we very full. I remember when I had to buy new shoes or clothes, my mother would always tell me, "We have temporary difficulties, so please wait, daughter. Your elder sister will sew something of scraps, and then we will get rich, God's willing".

When I turned eight, I went to school. I went to a Ukrainian school because there were no Jewish schools in our area.

There were Jewish schools and kindergartens in our town. My eldest sister went there, and learned such songs as, "Hey, play and dance, sing, mede loch mach a zoy, mede fis lach mach a zoy" [sings]. My sister who was born in 1919 also studied at a Jewish school for two or three years, and

then she was transferred to a Ukrainian school.

Other children at school (Russians, Ukrainians) called me a kike; they said I had a tail. I showed them that I had no tail to prove that I was not a demon, but human, just like them.

Teachers treated us normally. They called us good names, and when they saw that it was hard for me to speak Russian, they would say, "Don't hurry, just think and you will remember". They never gave lower marks to the Jewish children.

I was a "young October League member" and a young pioneer. I was very active; I sang in choir and danced. My parents, even though they were religious, liked it very much. They were interested in my life. My father would always ask me what new songs I've learned, what instructions I got.

After school I went to the Kiev Medical Accoucheur School, which later turned into the Medical Technical School. I was a good student.

People thought I was a Russian or a Ukrainian. They would invite me to their Easter parties and treat me well. We played together, walked together, did our homework together and everyone was fine. We went together to the beach and to the "Communard" cinema in Podol.

After the technical school I was sent to the village of Dubechnya, but the situation there was very bad. I stayed at one peasant's house. Everybody there talked about Jews being the cause for such poor life, saying that the whole government and Kaganovich were Jews and that the Jews "would never let us have a good life". "Until we deal with those Jews we will not have a good life", that's what people said in the village, where I had to work, and at the house of that peasant, and in the hospital.

So, I fled to Kiev. When I returned to Kiev, my mother did not let me work anywhere else