

Natan Shapiro



I, Natan Shapiro, photographed on my 20th birthday on 15th April 1938 in Korosten.

I finished the 8th grade in 1935 and wrote a letter to Postyshev, 2nd secretary of the Communist Party of Ukraine. People said that Postyshev was a kind and sympathetic man and they often requested him to help resolve their problems. I sent him a long letter with the description of my story: my invalidity and illness. I also wrote that I wanted to continue my studies.

Some time afterward a letter from Postyshev arrived addressed to the town department of public education. There was also an assignment for me to go to the orthopedic institute in Kiev. My mother and I and the manager of the town department of public education went to Kiev.

I saw the city of my dreams again. I saw military marching along Kreschatik, the main street in Kiev – there was no holiday but they were marching before going to another course of training. We walked through the city for several hours before we went to see a doctor.

I had to stay in hospital for a long time. I had a few surgeries to straighten my leg, but it was still shorter than my other leg. I also had an orthopedic shoe made in Kiev that made walking easier for me.

I missed a whole year at school and decided to go to work and study in the evening school like my brother did. My mother worked at a pharmacy. Although she had no education she learned to make distilled water at a special unit and weigh powders for making medications.

My mother wanted me to work with her, but I was not interested. Our relative, my father's cousin Zalman, organized an accounting course in Korosten and admitted me there free of charge. Upon finishing the course I practiced at the post office where Henry was chief accountant. In 1937 I became an accountant in the military trade department where I worked until the beginning of the Great Patriotic War in June 1941.