

Frida Palanker's And Her School Friends



My school friends and I, Frida Veprinskaya. I'm the 2nd on the right. From left to right: Fenia, Frania, Frida and Liza.

There was a Ukrainian school across the street from our school. I went to school when I was 8. My sisters also went to this school later. Ukrainian was a problem for me at the beginning - I didn't know it, but I was making a good progress in it. About half of the children in my class were Jews. But there was no national issue at that time. There were Jews among teachers as well.

I became a young Octobrist and then a pioneer at school. Admittance to the pioneers was a festive ceremony held at the conference-hall at school. After they tied our neck ties the pioneer leader said "Be ready!" and we replied in chorus "Always ready!" (to struggle for the cause of the CPSU - Communist party of the Soviet Union). My responsibility as a pioneer was to help my classmate with his Russian grammar. He came to my home after classes and wrote dictations. I remember how proud I was when he received his first good mark for the dictation at school.

I liked history and literature, but I wasn't quite fond of mathematics. When I was in the 2nd form my parents sent me to study at the music school to learn to play the violin. I had classes there twice a week. A piano was a second instrument that I was learning to play.

We celebrated all Soviet holidays. Schoolchildren and teachers went to the parades and carried flags and slogans. There were concerts at school after the parades. At home we celebrated Jewish and Soviet holidays, because such was a tradition. We also celebrated New Year and birthday of all family members at home.