

Gherda Kagan And Her Family.



This is my family. From left to right: my mother Raisa Zivik-Kagan, my grandmother Esphir Zivik, my father Isaac Kagan, I, Gherda Kagan, and my cousin brother Victor Oswald. This photo was made in Odessa in 1948. My cousin Victor with his friend visited us and this friend took the photo in the yard of our house. In 1946 we returned to Odessa. I heard that my teacher of music and her mother were buried alive. She was so beautiful and so kind and I've never got over this. There were other tenants in our apartment. My mother and father made the rounds of their acquaintances looking for our belongings. Romanians took away all better things. We found a mirror, grandmother's box, carved walnut wood sticks with bronze incrustation, damaged by shipworms. Our neighbors told us that the janitor had our wardrobe. When my mother went to see the janitor's daughter, her friends, they grew up together, she showed her an ax from behind the closed door and said: 'If you make a step, this ax will damage the wardrobe first and then you will know it as well'. We lived in the territory of the plant for a year and a half and I went to school #103 in Moldavanka. We studied French. My grandmother helped me to improve my French and I finished the 7th grade with an award for my accomplishments. In 1947, at the age of 14, I joined Komsomol. In 1948 we received an apartment in Bolshaya Arnautskaya Street, 19. I went back to my first school. It was a school for girls now. I studied there for three years. There were wonderful teachers who gave me knowledge and training to serve me for the rest of my life. There were 13 graduates with medals in our graduation classes in 1950. At the prom they first handed school certificates and then those who had gold and silver medals were invited to the stage where they greeted us, but we didn't have our certificates yet since medals were to be approved by higher authorities. A week passed and it was high time to submit my documents to a college, but I didn't have my certificate. There was another victim: Natasha Kibertseva, a Jewish girl from another graduation class. My father went to find out what was wrong and they told him to forget about my medal. My father was acquainted with 'fair' Soviet law proceedings and was not going to fight for the medal with authorities. Fortunately, Kibertseva and I managed to enter colleges without medals, though this was the first year when Jews began to face obstacles entering higher educational institutions. There was struggle against cosmopolitans in process. Many of my Jewish friends failed to enter colleges, though they studied as well as I did. I entered the technological department of tinned food of the Food Industry College. When I became a student this dressmaker that my mother knew made me a suit from inexpensive half-woolen fabric of bottle green color.