

# Sheindlia Krishtal With Her Classmate Nadia Belan



My classmate Nadia Belan and I, Sheindlia Krishtal, photographed for the memory. Kiev, Photo shop in Sennaya square, 1937.

I was born in 1922. Before 1928 we lived in the center of Kiev where they had a haberdashery store that occupied a part of their two-storied house. Our family continued to live in a big house with a front and a backyard entrance. There was a big and fancy front door that led into a corridor, then to the kitchen with a big stove and to the backyard. There were li-lac bushes (white, lilac and purple) in the yard and a nice orchard. We were a wealthy family. We had a housewife - Marta, a German woman. I remember her singing me German songs. I could un-derstand German. My mother tongue is Yiddish, but we also spoke Russian and Ukrainian at home.

In 1929 our well being broke to pieces. We were ordered to move out of our house. I was only 7 years old and have only dim memories of the event. Now I understand that NKVD confiscated our house and store. We had never seen our father nervous before, but when it happened he became rather irritable. Martha disappeared all of a sudden. I couldn't understand what was happening. We moved to the outskirts of the town. My father rented a small apartment of one room and kitchen. Our life changed dramatically since we moved. My mother baked bread by herself and we rode a horse-driven cart to buy food products in a village. My father didn't have a job and we were constantly hungry. We dropped observing Jewish traditions or celebrating holiday. Authorities strug-gled against religion, and we were scared of these authorities - we didn't quite know what to expect from them.

In 1930 our family decided to move to Kiev. Shortly after we moved to Kiev my mother had another stroke and again she had to stay in bed.

I went to the fifth form at school #21. It was a Ukrainian school. It was an old and beautiful building with high halls and big windows. Later our school moved to another building in Chekhov Lane. I was fond of languages and liked Russian and Ukrainian classes. I always protected the weak ones in my class. Later, when I worked at the editor's house, I helped many people that asked me for help. My other close friend beside Fania was Nadia Belan. We were friends after the war, too.