

Natan Beitner



This is a picture of my brother Natan Beitner. It was taken in the 1930s in Katowice.

Natan is wearing glasses, looking very smart. My brother Natan was smarter and more talented than I. I kept arguing with Natan all the time. We would fight over everything, but he was very chivalrous.

I remember how once, when I was supposed to get a spanking for something, he stood in front of me and didn't let Mom or Father spank me. We were later very close, we liked each other very much. Natan kept to himself.

He was involved in his technical things. He was tinkering all the time, electrical equipment. For example he built some radios. I remember he also took pictures with Father's camera and he took this one picture of our cousin in a bottle.

At first he took a picture of a bottle, then he placed the image of this cousin on the same film. He went to the Berek Joselewicz Public School in Katowice, I later graduated from the same school.

I remember some names of my brother's friends, girls: Fela Frejlich, Mici Meler, Hanka Urbach. My brother had some friends, boys, but I don't remember him having a close friend, no.

I remember how he was getting ready for his bar mitzvah. There was this Hebrew teacher in the public school. His name was Winer and he prepared my brother.

After he graduated from seven grades of public school, when Natan was 13 or 14 years old, my parents sent him to an agricultural school in Helenówek near Łódź.

My parents were probably thinking about going to Palestine and wanted Natan to learn about farming, so he'd have a job there. The school in Helenówek was directed by the 'king' of Łódź, Rumkowski.

My brother only spent several months in that school. I remember that I went there to visit him with my parents in the fall and Natan was back in Katowice shortly afterwards. I think he didn't like it much.

In Katowice he was admitted to a technical school, which didn't accept Jews at all. Natan tried to get in three times. Each time he passed the exams easily, but they didn't want to admit him. But he was stubborn and they had to finally admit him in 1938.

So there were a thousand students in all and two Jews: my brother Natan Beitner and one boy from Bedzin - Dudek Naparstek, that was his name, as I recall it now.

My brother didn't graduate from this school. Natan didn't want to go to Palestine, like my parents and I wanted. He didn't have anything to do with Zionism, he was more of a communist.