

Boris Molodetski With His Friends



This is me, Boris Molodetski, with my friends. From left to right: I, Boris Molodetski, Boris Milgram, Tsylia Rozenshtein, Boris Reznik (standing), Grisha Goldenberg. This photo was taken in Odessa in 1940 at the party made for Boris Reznik when he was to go to serve in the army. All of my friends are Jews.

In 1932 my father went to work in a closed store of NKVD. Life became easier for us. During the period of famine my father received food packages and flour. My mother baked rolls, but she didn't give any to take to school since there were hungry children around. Our school director was a well-known pedagog in our town. His name was Grigori Markovich Radzinski. He hired the best teachers. There were pedagogical experiments conducted in our school. One of them was a method of teamwork. Grades were divided into groups consisting of one pupils with strong knowledge and few weaker ones. Teachers usually asked head pupils in a group to come to the blackboard to answer and then they put same marks to the rest of his team as he got. There was no anti-Semitism in our school. Most of my classmates were Jews. Misha Beiderman, our best pupil, impressed us with the width of his literary interests. He was head boy of our class and Komsomol secretary. My friend Igor Chop told me that Misha tried hard to convince him to repudiate from his father who was imprisoned in 1937, for his former service in the tsarist army as an officer. In our class no parents of schoolchildren were arrested, but in the parallel class there were about five children whose parents had been arrested. Our director Mr. Radzinski was a decent person. He supported these children. Igor Chop recently told me that director called him to his office to say words of support. Once on a Soviet holidays we were in the theater where a representative of Komsomol district committee greeted us with general phrases I said aloud: 'Again propaganda for the Soviet power!' Our history teacher was sitting beside me. She heard what I said and on the following day she called my mother to school and said 'You are playing with fire when you allow yourself to talk dangerously in the presence of your child'.

When I was a senior pupil I got fond of classical music. My friend Lyusik Rozenblit had an acquaintance who was administrator in the Opera Theater. We went to Rigoletto [opera by Giuseppe Verdi, famous Italian composer of the 19th century], with Mr. Savchenko, a famous baritone. My friends and I also went to see the Blue Blouse performances where they sang 'We are trade union members and we wear blue blouses, we shall give all bourgeois our answer'. [Ed. note:

Blue Blouse was the worker's amateur propaganda group.] I finished school in 1939. I had my father's jacket altered to wear it to my prom. I had all excellent marks in my certificate and was admitted to the Medical College without exams. We never heard about any limitations for Jewish appellants to colleges. I didn't dream about medicine, but I joined my friends Boris Reznik and Grisha Golderberg (both Jews) were going to enter the Medical College and I decided to join them. I enjoyed studying there and the more I learned the more I got attracted to this profession. We had highly qualified lecturers. I earned money to buy the first suit in my life when I was the first-year student: I gave private classes to a pupil.

When we were first-year students an order was issued canceling all privileges for students. We became subject to service in the army. Since I had inguinal hernia and a medical commission in the military registry office made a conclusion: fit for military service with limitations, reserve of the 2nd turn. My best friend Boris Reznik was recruited to the army in 1940. When the war began Boris was a political officer in the army. He took part in the Kursk Battle and returned from the war in the rank of guard captain. After World War II he finished Odessa Medical College with honors and worked in the district hospital in Novaya Odessa village of Niklaev region. In 1956 he moved to Odessa and worked as chief doctor of the urology department in Odessa regional hospital. Now he is a pensioner.