

Naum Kravets And His Friend



I am on the left. To the right is the neighbor boy, whose name unfortunately I don't remember.

The picture was taken by our house in Moscow in 1937.

I was born on 4th January 1925. When I turned six, I went to the pre-school of the seven-year Russian school. It was the first time when I came across anti-Semitism on a social level.

It was a suburb, Cherkizovo, so there were less educated people, more peasants. Children weren't brought up very well. I was the smallest kid in the class and didn't know how to fight. The other boys often teased me and cried out, 'Yid.' It was very offensive.

There were other Jews in our class, but I was the only one who was teased. In two years the church that was close to our house was demolished, and a Russian ten-year compulsory school was built instead.

I was transferred to that school. I made friends with boys of different nationalities. Russians, Ukrainians and Jews were among my friends. There was even one Latvian boy. I kept in touch with one of my school friends, David Akselbant, in the lines and after the war. He was a lawyer. He is deceased now.

I wasn't a very good student. To begin with, I was lazy, besides my health was poor. I got sick pretty often in childhood, I was a bad trencherman and Mother suffered a lot because of that. I missed classes because when I got sick, then I had to catch up. In spite of that I wasn't a poor student, medium I would say.

I was a young Octobrist, then a pioneer, and then a Komsomol member. Like most children back in that time I was very politically motivated. Political classes were held on a regular basis as well as lectures on international events.