

Zhenia Kriss With Her Brother Froim Kriss



My brother Froim Kriss, and I on a photo taken in Kiev in 1938. We were photographed to give this picture to our parents as a present. Froim was born in Kiev in 1922. My father intended to raise us religiously, although he violated Jewish rules every now and then. Only boys were given education in Jewish families and when my brother turned five our father hired a teacher for him to teach him Jewish laws, traditions and rituals, and the Talmud and the Torah, at home. But the teacher's efforts were fruitless. Froim wasn't successful in his studies. I was in the same room and tried to explain tasks to him, but he told me that studying always made him feel sleepy. Our playmates in the yard were Young Octobrists and pioneers, they sang merry patriotic songs and played ball. All this seemed so much more interesting and important than boring religious studies. We were growing up in an atheist surrounding, and my father realized that he wouldn't be able to turn my brother into a faithful Jew. My brother was on the front during the war. After the war my parents and my sister returned to Kiev from evacuation. Our house had been destroyed by a bomb and they were living in the kitchen with our distant relatives. Later a room in a shed in the same yard got vacant, and my parents moved in there. My brother was a war invalid and after some time he received an apartment from the plant where he worked. My brother was married, but he didn't have children. After the war he graduated from the Kiev Polytechnic Institute. He was a talented engineer. He worked at the Kiev Relay and Automation Plant for many years. My sister Inna lived in my brother's family after our parents died. I supported her buying her clothes and necessary medications. Inna was a very kind person like all people with Down syndrom. She died in 1991. My brother died in 1999.