

## Ida Kristina With Her Class



This is my class photographed after finishing the 7th grade. I am the second on the left in the first row, my Ukrainian friend Pronia Sereda is beside me. The photo was taken in Chernigov in 1934. I went to a Ukrainian school in Leskovitsa in 1927. I was the only Jewish girl in my class; my classmates were Ukrainian and Russian. Most of my classmates were Ukrainian boys and girls from the neighboring villages. I got along well with my classmates and there were no conflicts. Nobody ever hurt me and basically nobody cared about nationality. After I finished the 4th grade I went to study at another Ukrainian higher secondary school. I got along well with my schoolmates. I liked studying at school. I became a Young Octobrist, and then a pioneer. I took part in public activities. I sang in our school choir. At home I had classes with a private music teacher. She taught me to play the piano. My music classes didn't last long since my parents couldn't afford to pay for my classes. However, I liked playing the piano and picked up tunes by myself. I liked to go to the cinema with my friends. There was a jazz band playing in the vestibule before the screening of a film. I liked the young fair-haired pianist that played in the orchestra. I simply fell in love with him. I dreamed that we would be together. He rented a room from our neighbor. One evening this man came to our home and asked my parents their consent to our marriage. They were stunned since I was just 15 years old and studied in the 9th grade at school. Boris Kristin, that was his name, told my parents that he would wait until I finished school and my parents gave their consent. My parents didn't mind that he wasn't a Jew. I became his fiancée. I looked forward to coming of age and getting married. A year and half passed quickly. Boris and I were never alone, we could only meet in the presence of adults. They probably stood guard over my virginity. He visited us at home and we had tea with our family. Sometimes he took me to the cinema holding my hand. Boris addressed me with the formal 'You' until we got married. He promised that after we got married he would take best care of me. During my last year at school my parents prepared me for getting married. They bought me two dresses, a crepe de Chine one and a woolen one, fabric for a suit and a woolen coat. Before this I had walked in the street barefoot wearing my sister's clothes. We had a small wedding party in 1936 when I was 17 years old. A big table for guests was set up in our garden. Our guests were musicians from the orchestra, colleagues from the cinema, my sisters and their

husbands and our neighbors. Pronia Sereda, my schoolmate, also came to the wedding. We were life-long friends with her. She was Ukrainian.