

Sima Medved



This is a photo of me, taken in Zaporozhye in 1928. I worked at the foundry of the Kommunar Plant at the time. I rarely went to see my father thus I sent him this picture so that he could at least have my photograph. I went to work at the foundry of the Kommunar Plant in 1924. To cast an item with an opening there had to be a kernel installed in a mould. Kernels were made from sand, clay, flour and additives that were compacted in tins and dried in the stove. I was a laborer making kernels. It was hot and noisy in the foundry, and every now and then a mould with cast iron fell on our feet, but I earned well and liked the work. There were many older Jewish workers at the foundry and only a few young Jewish men. Jews were highly skilled workers. I don't think they were religious. Iron casting was a continuous process and we had to work on Saturdays. But at least all Jews celebrated Jewish holidays at that time. Young people didn't go to the synagogue because holidays were workdays, but all families remembered old traditions and tried to celebrate nonetheless. Older

people prayed, and younger people respected their religiosity and tried to join their parents for a celebration. I had an opportunity to rent an apartment and pay for it. I didn't cook for myself. I had meals at the canteen in the plant. It was a good canteen. Of course, following the kashrut was out of the question considering the circumstances. I was a Komsomol activist. I spoke and recited poems about Lenin and other leaders of the Revolution at meetings. I became a candidate for the Communist Party at the foundry in 1927, and a party member in 1928. I believed that communists were the vanguard of the people and wanted to be one of them. I also attended evening school classes. For my industriousness and willingness I was sent to a Rabfak in Kiev in 1928. I had friends and we often got together. We played 'flower flirtation': boys and girls wrote greetings or declarations of love and exchanged them. I didn't spend much time playing with my friends because I was trying to study. It was popular to correspond with military men at the time. It was a common thing. Girls were stimulated to support and strengthen the patriotic spirits of the brave young men guarding the peace and quiet of our motherland. I corresponded with a Russian military. He wrote interesting and smart letters. Once he wrote that he was demobilizing and wanted to take me with him, but all I could think of was studying. I wrote to him about my future plans, and it put an end to our correspondence.