

Isaac Rozenfain At A Party With His Co-Students



This is me (2nd from the left in the upper row), at a party after finishing the 3rd year of the construction technical school, with my co-students Semyon Rapoport (1st from the left), Anatoliy Bregman (1st from the right), Mikhail Fierman (on the top). This photo was taken in Kishinev in 1939. After successfully finishing elementary school I entered the Aleku Russo boys' gymnasium. I had moderate success at the gymnasium. One afternoon, when I was supposed to be in class, I was noticed by a gymnasium tutor, who was to watch over the students. I was walking with a girl and I was smoking a cigarette. I was 15 or 16 years. I was immediately expelled from the gymnasium and my father's attempts to restore me there failed. The family council decided that I should go to

a technical school. The family council decided that I should go to a technical school. I entered the construction technical school on the corner of Zhukovskaya and Lyovskaya Streets. My sad experience changed my attitude towards my studies and I became one of the best students in the technical school. This school was owned by a priest. Architect Merz, a German, was the best teacher. The recruitment age to the Romanian army was 20 and I didn't have to go to the army before 1940. I was born the same year as the son of Karl II, Mihay. This was supposed to release me from the army service, and also, I guess the month and the date had to coincide. I also remember the rumors that Mihay wounded his father's lover and that she was a Jew. The situation for Jews got much worse then. I remember the New Year [Christian] celebration when Antonescu was the ruler. There was the threat of pogroms and the celebration was very quiet. I don't know how serious this threat really was, but the feeling of fear prevailed. I don't remember whether they introduced any anti-Jewish laws in Romania at that time, but there was this kind of spirit in the air. Perhaps for this reason we welcomed the Soviet forces, entering the town on 29th June 1940. People were waiting for them all night long. I stood on the corner of Armianskaya and Alexandrovskaya Streets. There were crowds of people around. At 4am the first tanks entered the town. The tank men stopped their tanks and came out hugging people. When the Soviet rule was established, teaching at the technical school continued, only the priest stopped being its owner. Our teachers stayed. They knew Russian very well and started teaching us in Russian. A few other boys and I repaired two rooms in a building to house the district Komsomol committee. We plastered and whitewashed the walls. I joined the Komsomol sincerely and with all my heart. I liked the meetings, discussions and Subbotniks, when we planted trees.