

Sara Ushpitsene



This is I, Sara Ushpitsene, in front of our house in Luksiai. I am on the bike, which I had been given for Pesach. I am standing by the milk factory, where we took the surplus of milk. The picture was taken in the 1930s in Luksiai. I was born in 1925 in Luksiai. When it was the time for me to study, I went to a Lithuanian lyceum. There was no other place in town, neither Jewish nor any other. Beside me, there were several more Jewish kids in our class. I was friends with both Lithuanian and Jewish kids. After school we went to the park or to the lake, which was most attractive in winter. There we skated and went tobogganing. My siblings and I had to study after school. Girsh kept teaching us religion. Daily after school we had to study Yiddish, both written and oral, as well as Jewish history. Sometimes we even cried, envying the Lithuanian kids, who had no extra load, but my father was adamant. His dream was for his kids to be true Jews. I had a lot of other duties apart from my studies. I helped Mother with gardening and house chores. We took water from the water pump, which was about 100 meters away from the house. We took meat to Father's clients, worked in the kitchen garden and sold milk. In a word, I got used to working since early childhood. I wasn't a bad student at school, but I didn't get straight excellent grades. The teachers treated me fairly. We didn't feel any different attitude towards us. I had studied in that school for six years and then left for Sakiai to study at the lyceum. I successfully passed the entrance exam and became a lyceum student. Every day I had to go to Sakiai, which was eight kilometers away from the place where we lived. At times Father took me in a cart. There were times when I had to walk there along with several other students. I also had Lithuanian friends in Sakiai. There were no Jewish girls in my class at the lyceum. By that time there were cinemas in Sakiai and Luksiai. We went dancing and watched movies. I was totally apolitical. Of course, I knew of Zionist organizations and underground Komsomol, but I wouldn't join any of them. At that time the daughters of Mother's sister from Marijampole became members of Jewish Zionist organizations and left for Palestine to work in a kibbutz, but I didn't find that interesting.