

Fanya With Her Friends



The 20th Anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution. This is me and my friends (we studied together at the Institute) in Ukrainian dresses at the demonstration.

I worked at the Academy of Sciences Library and often visited the Jewish Culture Institute for the Academy of Sciences of Ukraine. My school teachers worked there: Yiddish teacher Skudinsky and Maidansky, the teacher of Ukrainian. My friends were Ulya Wolfmann, Nastya Adamenko, Barya Pavlova and Vera Turyan. We studied together at the Institute and everybody called us 'academicians'. We studied in the morning and I had to work in the evening. The working day was six hours. It remained like that until 1940: there existed a Law about the six-hour working day. I was busy with acquisition; later on I was 'shifted' to work with the alphabetical catalogue and sorted out catalogue cards the whole day. Later on I worked at the book distribution department, which was more convenient for me: I stayed at the Institute until 1 pm and had enough time to have lunch at home, as my Department worked between 4.30 pm and 11 pm. I came back home late at night. I was 17 years old at that time and I actually helped to support the family. Our work at the library was counted as practice, thus we graduated from the Institute within three years, in 1937.

I became member of the Young Communist League at the Academy of Sciences. In 1969 the Academy YCL organization celebrated an anniversary and I received an invitation. However, my son was sick and I was not able to go. I sent a long telegram, which was read out during the celebration.

When I graduated from the Institute in 1937, I worked as a Senior Librarian Assistant, later as a Librarian and finally as Senior Librarian. When I started to work as Chief Librarian, I was transferred to the Department of Arts. Its assets were stored at the Vladimirsky Cathedral and I had a key to it. The artist Nesterov arrived unexpectedly and I was told to go see him. He was very surprised and

said: 'Women were never allowed to the altar and suddenly a girl opens the door for me!' I invited students from the Institute of Arts to meet the famous artist. We usually worked in the Cathedral in summer. During the war the Germans destroyed all assets that were kept there.