

Iosif Yudelevichus And His Family



In this picture our family is having tea in the evening. We are sitting at the table covered with velvet table cloth, whereon there are beautiful dishes- carafe, crystal plate etc. My parents Taube and Abram Yudelevich, I and my elder brother David are at the table. The picture was made in our house in Kaunas in 1933.

My parents got married in 1923. They did not stay in Jonava for a long time. They moved to Kaunas shortly after wedding. They rented an apartment in the heart of the city. In 1925 my elder brother David was born. Father was a private lawyer and made pretty good money. Parents could afford a trip to the spa. It was in style and decent to take a vacation for couple of days or weeks to go seaside in any season. My brother was a feeble and in 1928 my mother expecting a child in couple of weeks, took brother to the seaside. They went to a village not far from Klaipeda [300 km from Vilnius]. Soon father came there as well. I was born in that village on the 25th of December 1928. Before long the family came back in Kaunas.

I remember myself from the age of five. Since early childhood my brother I had been close. We were called - Dodya and Osys, pronouncing our names separately. I remember the apartment, where I spent my childhood. There were five rooms in it- one room was after another. The first two rooms were occupied by father: one room was a reception, where his clients and visitors were waiting for him, and another room was father's office. Father's secretary Kozlovskiy was at the reception desk. Father's customers sat on the leathern couches waiting for my father to receive them. At that time my father was one of the most famous lawyers on civil cases in Kaunas. There was a large desk in father's office with a lamp and ink well, a small adjoining table for negotiations and book shelves containing the works on jurisprudence, books by ancient Greek and Roman philosophers and regulation documents. There were few fiction books. Most of them were written by Russian classics - Tolstoy, Turgenev etc. I do not remember whether there were books by Jewish writers at home. There was a large dining-room behind father's office. There was a large round

dining table, the one we are sitting now, arm- chairs, chairs, beautiful carved cupboard, bedroom furniture and children's furniture used by brother and I. Of course, there was a kitchen, but I cannot recall my being there. There were servants and a cook in the house so there was no need to go in the kitchen, as the food was served in the dining-room. Mother only ran the house, giving orders. Sometimes she went in the kitchen to make some corrections.

We, children, had the governesses. Our first governess was a Russian girl Irina. She was very kind and tender. I loved her a lot. Even now I cannot get why she was fired by my mother. Maybe she thought that brother and I were grown-up enough to have a nanny and she wanted a governess for us. After Irina German ladies worked for us. The first one was froelein Zina, then Gerta. They also were very kind.

Later on, when brother was a lyceum student, I was taken care of Froebel lady Doba, a young Jewish girl. One of her duties was to take strolls with me. Mother requested that we should stay outside as long as possible in the park or in the street. Mother said- "the child should breathe some air". Young Doba was mostly interested in cinema. German, American and even Soviet comedies were demonstrated in Kaunas. She and I watched a lot of movies. We agreed that mother would not know about that. Doba and I went to a cafe to eat ice-cream. There was Italian ice-cream cafe in the park. There was delicious ice-cream there, but mother would not approve of it so she thought there was a risk to have a sore throat. So, we did not tell her about that either.