

Maria Komarovskaya And Herschool Friends



I, Maria Komarovskaya, the last on the left, with my school friends. The girl in the center, wearing a dress with white collar, is Svetlana Yershova. The photo was made in 1936 in Kiev. I, Maria Yakovlevna Komarovskaya, was born in Oster on July 19, 1925. Oster is a small town in Chernigov region, which used to be a district center. Then this center was moved to Kozelets because Oster was far away from the highway. The town is beautiful and is located on the bank of the Desna river. I went to school in Kiev in 1932. It was a regular Russian secondary school. Our teachers were Russian, Jewish, and Ukrainian. I studied there for three years and then I moved to another one, which was closer to my house. So, the head of that second school was a Jew by the name of Mikhail Solomonovich Kagan. And there were many Jewish teachers there: our class master Berta Markovna Ruzhinskaya and many others. Students in our school were of different nationalities, but there were many Jews, maybe a half. We were all friends and nobody ever tried to find out who belongs to which nationality. We all were Soviet children. I remember how I became a young pioneer, I even remember the words of the oath we took, "I, a young pioneer of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, in front of my comrades give a solemn oath..." We wore pioneer ties of red. I was in charge of a pioneer unit in our class and organized different meetings. We sang songs at those meetings and I liked it. I could not become a member of Komsomol because the war broke out. When I returned to Kiev, there were only few of my former friends there. One of my friends Fanya was killed in Babiy Yar - she and her mother did not evacuate in time. I also had a Russian friend - Svetlana Yershova, who stayed in Kiev during occupation. Svetlana's elder sister worked for the Germans, but was spying for the guerillas and helped them a lot. Right before the liberation of Kiev she was arrested together with Svetlana and their mother. They were all shot in Babiy Yar. .