

Evadiy Rubalskiy With His Childhood Friend



This is me, Evadiy Rubalskiy (on the right) with my childhood friend, my former classmate Arkadiy Segal. We were photographed for the memory in 1934, I am 16 years old, Arkadiy is 17. This photo was taken in Kiev. I not met Arcady after we leaving school, and I do not know anything about his destiny.

I was born in 1918 and was named Evadiy - it's an old Jewish name. [Editor's note: 'Evadiy' is used in Slav languages, not only in Jewish families, but it is not a very common given name in our days. Probably in Evadiy Rubalskiy's homeland he knows only Jewish families using this name.] One of my deceased relatives must have had this name, and I was named after him according to Jewish customs, but I don't know. All I know is that this relative was a scientist: my mother always told me to try to be like that man, whom I was named after. I didn't study Hebrew. My parents spoke Yiddish to one another at home and spoke Russian to me and my sister. I could speak and understand Yiddish. The family celebrated all Jewish holidays, but I think they did it as a tribute to traditions. They went to the synagogue on holidays and then celebrated at home according to the rules. When a holiday was over, they continued to live their routinely Soviet life.

In 1928 I went to the first form of a Russian general education school. There were other Jewish children in my class. Our teachers or schoolmates had no prejudiced attitudes toward us. We had friends and nobody cared about the nationality. I don't think there was any anti-Semitism before the war [the World War II], at least, I didn't face any. I had Russian and Ukrainian friends and my mother never told me that I should have had only Jewish friends. I studied well. I became a young Octobrist, and a pioneer at school. Then our class was transferred to the Ukrainian school near our

house. I don't know what this transfer was caused by, I was young and could not be possibly bothered about such things. The only difference between such schools was the language of teaching. I had no problems with the Ukrainian language. In the 7th form I joined Komsomol. After finishing the 7th form in 1934 I had to go to work to help mama. I knew how hard it was for her to support the whole family (my father died in 1923).

Our neighbor was a plumber and a superintendent and he taught me what he knew about the job. My first job was at a construction site. I learned fast and soon I could work independently. I was even appointed a crew leader soon. On 13th November 1939 I was recruited to the army and sent to study in Kalinin, Donetsk region [about 500 km from Kiev], in reserve artillery regiment 19.