

## Rahil Shabad With Her Schoolmates



The picture was made on the occasion of graduation from school in Moscow in 1936. The picture of our class was taken with the teachers. The fourth in the bottom row is I. The teachers are in the 2nd row - the last to the left is a teacher in joinery, the teachers of mathematics and Russian language are next to him. I do not remember the rest.

In 1926 our family moved to Moscow. We lived in one room of 9,5 sq. m. Father worked very hard. In 1928 he lost job again. Only in 1929 father found a job at the construction site. He worked and studied at the evening department of Moscow construction institute. In spite of the fact that our living was very hard father managed to graduate from the institute. We were friendly, but life was hard on us. We did not have furniture. We slept on the baskets. We used sawing-machine as a table. The most important for my parents was for us to be well fed and to be healthy.

I went to Russian compulsory school at the age of 8. Our school was far from our house. There were children of almost all our neighbors. Sometimes we walked to school. At times our neighbor, a drayman gave us a lift to school in his cart. I was a good student, though I did not get straight excellent marks. It did not take me long to do home work. When I had spare time I helped mother about the house, tended my little sister Maria, whom I loved very much.

When I go back to my school years I understand that almost all my friends were Russian and the nationality factor did not stand in the way of our friendship. I did not feel anti-Semitism and did not even understand what it was like. I was a pioneer at school, then a Komsomol member. I was an active member of society. I was very diligent and exigent. If I was given a task I strove to fulfill it no matter what impediments might arise.

Having graduated school I decided to enter medical institute. I made up my mind to become a doctor because mother's health was feeble and I hoped that I would be able to help her get better. There was a tough competition in Moscow Medical Institute. I did not enter the institute like many other entrants. I went to Kursk and entered Medical Institute there. The institute was newly founded, viz. 2 years. It was in the premise of former prison. I lived in the hostel. I was keen on studies. Student's life appealed to me. In a year and a half I got ill. My elder brother Evsey came

and took me to Moscow. In a year I transferred to Moscow Medical Institute, but I was in the first year again. Remarkable people, best doctors of the country, great scientists taught us medicine. They did not only teach us mere medicine, they nurtured good human qualities in us, to be responsible for our actions. Consequently I worked in Moscow municipal committee of the peoples' control before it was reformed and my boss once said that I would become a good attorney as I fought for the justice and the right cause. I told: "I would not make a bad doctor either". We were taught to write the history of the patient thinking that a criminal investigator was behind us. We were very responsible for our actions. There were Jews in the institute but we did not cluster together by national groups. We chose friends by interests.