

Elka Vinograd



This is my sister Elka Vinograd, nee Muchnik, photographed in Orhei in the early 1930s, in the Elzon Photo Studio.

My sister Elka finished a Romanian gymnasium with honors. Then she went to Bucharest, where she entered university: Uncle Iosif Pagis advised her to enter the Pharmaceutical Faculty. Several years later Elka realized this wasn't what she wanted to do. She liked literature. While continuing her studies at the Pharmaceutical Faculty she entered the Faculty of Literature and Philosophy of this University. Elka graduated with two diplomas: in Pharmacology and Literature. She went to work in the Jewish school in the town of Arciz. She worked as a teacher. In 1933 she married Mendel Vinograd, the director of this school.

On 22nd June the Great Patriotic War began. Elka arrived shortly before the war. Her husband was mobilized to the army. She had had a miscarriage that affected her fertility and she couldn't have children. My sister went to work at the Orhei Medical School, teaching medical nurses for the army. When the evacuation began, the medical school arranged for a wagon for our family. We could load one piece of luggage onto it and had to follow the horse-drawn wagon walking. My sister tried to convince my parents to evacuate, but my mother said she wasn't going to walk and would try to find another wagon to depart. My sister and I agreed with our parents that we would meet across the Dniestr. We left Orhei on 7th July. We were in evacuation in Stalinabad.

When in summer 1944 the liberation of Moldova began, my sister started packing to go back home. Elka wrote a letter to the People's Commissariat of Education in Soroki. Kishinev was still occupied. Shortly afterwards we received a response and started obtaining all necessary documents. We left

home in December 1944. We got to the town at about two o'clock in the morning. The town was ruined. The central street was in ruins, overgrown with weeds. We spent the first night in our hometown by the stove in the militia office. Life was going on. Elka went to work at the Teachers' Training School where she received a room. It was a little room, but there were two beds, a table, two chairs and even a stove in it. It was all right to live in it! My sister was a good teacher. Elka was a very strong person.