

## Maria Sorkina And Her Schoolmates



These are students of the Dentist Faculty of the Tartu University where I studied. We were photographed after an exam. I remember their faces, but I can't remember the names. We did not meet after graduation, and I have no information about them. I think, the 2nd girl on the left in the 2nd row was called Sarah. She was from Tartu. I don't remember the others. I am sitting first from the right in the 2nd row wearing a striped blouse. This photo was taken in Tartu in 1923.

I always wanted to be independent, even though I came from a wealthy family. My parents provided well for me, but I never felt comfortable asking them for pocket money. When I studied in the gymnasium, I helped junior pupils with their studies and was paid for these classes. I also started a diary where I put down my plans and considerations. I wrote in capital letters on page 1: 'Become independent and never depend on anyone!' and underlined the phrase. This was my goal in life. The ordinary Jewish girl's life of getting married and becoming a housewife wasn't for me. They were dependent on their husbands and even if they wanted to change their life, they couldn't do it without an education or vocation. This kind of life definitely wasn't for me. I always wanted to be independent, and I still follow this principle. I've always earned my living and could do whatever I wanted with my money.

After finishing the gymnasium I entered the Dental Faculty of Tartu University. It took me no time to pick up Estonian. At first, my knowledge of German and Russian was good, before I started speaking Estonian quite fluently. I graduated from University in 1925. After the university I worked as a dentist in Tartu for some time before I received a job offer to go work in Sigulda, a resort town where I worked before getting married. I met my future husband David Sorokin in Tartu University.