

Etka Adashkaite With Her Friend



This is my cousin Etka Adashkaite (to the left) with her friend, whose name I do not know. The picture was made in Vilnius in 1955.

Father's sister Leya was the closest in the family. She was five or six years younger than my father. Leya was the only one from the family who was literate. I do not know where she studied. She knew how to read and write in Yiddish and Russian. She read books and knew the rudiments of accounting. Leya married a local Jew Moishe Adashkis, who was in charge of fire-fighters' team of our town. Moshe, Leya and their children lived in a mansion by the fire-fighters' office and a garage with the only fire truck in town and all necessary fire-fighting equipment. Our house was right in front of Leya's one. I spent my childhood with my cousins- Rahmil and Etka, children of Leya and Moishe. Rahmil was one year older than me and Etka was about three years younger. When grandfather died, grandmother Shifra lived with Leya's family.

Aunt Leya's husband Moishe came back from the front with impaired stomach. When Leya found a job, she took her children from the orphanage. Rahmil left for studies in Kaliningrad. There he served in the army and after demobilization started living on his own. Etka lived with her parents. In 1949 Moishe was arrested when anti-Semitist state campaigns commenced [Campaign against 'cosmopolitans']. He was sentenced to 10 years in camps in accordance with the political article 58 of Civil Code of USSR [It was provided by this article the any action directed against upheaval, shattering and weakening of the power of the working and peasant class should be punished] - and nobody explained what he did wrong. There was no trial, he merely was arrested and that was it. After husband's arrest aunt Leya lived modestly by herself. There was nothing she could help us with. Moishe came back home after Stalin's death, when unfairly condemned were released. In

1956 he was rehabilitated. His health was completely undermined and Moishe died in 1959. Aunt Leya survived him by eight years and died in 1967. She was buried next to my father in Jewish cemetery of Vilnius in accordance with the Jewish rites. Her children Rahmil and Etkā are currently living with their families in Israel. They have grandchildren and great grandchildren.