

Naum Poliak



This is me, Naum Poliak. Picture taken in Fastov in 1937.

I am Naum Iosifovich poliak. I was born on 3 September 1923 in Fastov, Kiev Province.

I remember that in Fastov our neighbor was tsadic Kipnis. He was an older man at the time when I was born. He was married for the second time. He was a rich man. He owned a dairy shop, the only

one in Fastov district. Peasants from quite a few villages came to his dairy shop. I remember he had an apple tree in his orchard, its branches were hanging over our garden and we, kids, were stealing his apples. Tsadik was sitting in his garden at this time muttering his prayers. The Soviet power didn't touch him. But, as my father told me, they issued an order some time in 1925. According to this order the Jews had to turn over everything that had to do with the Jewish religion. They brought all these things to the yard of Karpilovskiy. I've mentioned him already. He was selling second-hand things. He had heaps of tahles, ancient Jewish books, leather straps for tfillings, prayer books and Tora scrolls. I remember that we, kids, went there to look at these things. Of course, we didn't understand that it was a blow for the Jewish population of the town.

Our parents always spoke Russian with us, children. They sometimes used Jewish words talking to one another. In my childhood I went to a Ukrainian kindergarten and then went to a Ukrainian school, although there was a Jewish school in Fastov. I don't know what the reason was. Most likely, my father, suffering from the tragedy in his family was trying to tear us away from the Jewish life. I had friends of different nationalities - Russian, Ukrainian and Jewish. Nationality didn't matter then. For example, later, in Kiev, we went to the Ukrainian and Jewish theater. In the Jewish theater we saw "Tevie-the dairy man" by Sholom Aleihem in Yiddish and translated the text to my Russian friends.

I was an active pioneer. At that time we, pioneers, went to the Palace of Pioneers almost every day to various clubs. I finished 8 classes in Fastov. In summer our father sold the house in Fastov and built an apartment in Kiev, on the attic floor in Kreschatik. In autumn we moved to Kiev. This was at the end of 1938. My father did this so that we, his sons, could continue our education in the higher educational institutions.