

Iosif Yudelevichus With His Brother David And Their Friends



This is a group picture taken on the holiday party for children arranged in our house in Kaunas. Probably it was Purim. My nanny, German lady Gerta, is with us (judging by the date of the picture 1932 -1933. At that time she was working for our family). Gerta is the first to the left squatting. I am standing to the right. I am wearing a striped hat. In the middle of the picture is my brother David sitting on the chair. The rest of the children are our neighbors. The ones I remember - to the left is Gera Holem, next to him is Lena Vorvolis. Unfortunately, I do not know what happened to

them. I had not met them after war. Next to my brother in the center is George Chesna, our neighbor. George was in the train with us when we were leaving for evacuation. His parents perished. George came back in Lithuania, then he left for Israel. I know that recently he was alive and lived in Jerusalem. Fira Amsterdamskaya wearing a dark dress, was in Kaunas ghetto during Great Patriotic War, then in concentration camp. She survived it and came back in Kaunas. After war she got married, had children. Fira died about five years ago. The girl with finger in her mouth is Mara. I do not know her last name. Her fate is not known to me either. Fima Hainson is between her and Gerta. He and his parents left for Palestine before the outbreak of Great Patriotic War. I do not know what happened to him.

I remember myself from the age of five. Since early childhood my brother I had been close. We were called - Dodya and Osya, pronouncing our names separately. I remember the apartment, where I spent my childhood. There were five rooms in it- one room was after another. The first two rooms were occupied by father: one room was a reception, where his clients and visitors were waiting for him, and another room was father's office. At that time my father was one of the most famous lawyers on civil cases in Kaunas and made pretty good money. There was a large dining-room behind father's office. There was a large round dining table, the one we are sitting now, arm-chairs, chairs, beautiful carved cupboard, bedroom furniture and children's furniture used by brother and I. Of course, there was a kitchen, but I cannot recall my being there. There were servants and a cook in the house so there was no need to go in the kitchen, as the food was served in the dining-room. We, children, had the governesses. Our first governess was a Russian girl Irina. She was very kind and tender. I loved her a lot. Even now I cannot get why she was fired by my mother. Maybe she thought that brother and I were grown-up enough to have a nanny and she wanted a governess for us. After Irina German ladies worked for us. The first one was froelein Zina, then Gerta. They also were very kind.

Later on, when brother was a lyceum student, I was taken care of Froebel lady Doba, a young Jewish girl. One of her duties was to take strolls with me. Mother requested that we should stay outside as long as possible in the park or in the street. Mother said- "the child should breathe some air". Young Doba was mostly interested in cinema. German, American and even Soviet comedies were demonstrated in Kaunas. She and I watched a lot of movies. We agreed that mother would not know about that. Doba and I went to a cafe to eat ice-cream. There was Italian ice-cream cafe in the park. There was delicious ice-cream there, but mother would not approve of it so she thought there was a risk to have a sore throat. So, we did not tell her about that either.