

Basya Chaika's Mother Rachel Gorenstein With Her Friend Manya



My mother, Rachel Gorenstein, with her friend Manya. Gymnasium student. My mother is wearing a male gymnasium costume. The photo was made in 1916 in Kiev. My mother had been born into a very rich family of bankers, but the revolution changed all that. Instead of her fine mansion, we lived in a communal flat. There were 7 rooms and a family of at least four people in each room. My mother knew many stories about her wealthy family and how religious her father was, but she kept

it a secret from me until I was older. When my father's parents visited, she did keep separate dishes for them and a tallit and tefelin for my father's father. My father also brought real matzo to us on Passover from my grandfather, and it was a big secret. We could not share it with our neighbors, because it was against the law, but my mother's recipe of noodles was used by our whole international house. I remember that my mother, being young, told me how in the 1920's, a famous Kiev rabbi invited her to join his family in their emigration to America. And she, a daughter of rich parents, from whom Revolution confiscated everything they had, nevertheless decided to stay in her motherland - and she never regretted it.