

Julianna Kann



That's me at the age of 14. The picture was taken in Tallinn in 1952.

I was a Soviet child, who did not know Jewish traditions, religion. I know that children were raised Jewish in certain Jewish families, but it did not happen in our family. Mother was not religious, though she said that she believed in God. At the same time, she loved Christmas, because it was always richly celebrated in France. Therefore, when speaking of my mom, it would be funny to mention Jewish religiousness. She was a European woman. I think, all Jewish traditions were kept in my father's family and imbibed in them since childhood.

Father was very circumspect and did not trust the Soviet regime. He wanted to guard me from possible trouble as the Soviet regime struggled against religion. I was a convinced pioneer and later a Komsomol member. I was very active, living like anybody else. Now I cannot delete that part

of my life saying that it had never happened to me. This is the way it was. Father probably did not want me to prevaricate and we did not discuss Jewish traditions at home. In general, we did not speak much.

I remember very well from my post-war childhood that there was matzah, boiled eggs and saucers with salted water in some houses. I remember that my father went to fetch matzah from the prayer house, based in the former school premises. I remember it vividly. I did not know what matzah was for and on which days it appeared. I asked no questions. I took no interest in that. We never concealed the fact that we were Jews. I was aware of that and did not hold it back. It was even silly at times. Even in summer, when we were on vacation, and went to the Southern Caucasus bazaar, I was called by some of the salespeople: 'Hey, countrywoman, come over!' – I replied, 'I am not your countrywoman, I am a Jew.'