

Maya Pivovar



I, Maya Pivovar. This photo was taken on my birthday. Kiev, 1930.

I, Maya Pivovar, was born in 1927. I was born and grew up in Kiev. I didn't have a nanny. I went to the kindergarten, but there was a period of time, when I didn't go to the kindergarten, and my mother and father had to go to work. There was a woman in our house, who had a group of 5-6 children in her care. She told us something, I don't remember. She was called 'frebelichka' tutor and she had finished a Frebel school.

Our family didn't celebrate Jewish traditions. My parents were members of the party and atheists. In 1926 my father joined the Communist Party. My mother was a member of the communist Party since 1932. Our family spent our leisure time like many other Soviet families. My mother's relatives visited us - they were a big family. We got together on birthdays, on Soviet holidays and new Year. Of course, we went to the theater and to the cinema. I remember the theater of Red army in Merengovskaya, present Zankovetskaya, Street, and the Children's Theater in Karl Marx Street.

We lived with our parents in a huge communal apartment before the Great Patriotic War. There were five other families living there. There was a big kitchen in the end of a long corridor. There were six tables in the kitchen, one table belonged to each family living in the apartment. I remember somebody brought potatoes to my father and it was dropped on the floor. I and our neighbors' children used to bake these potatoes in a small oven. We had plain furniture: a desk, a divan with a high back and a cupboard. There was plain crockery. There was a plate-shaped radio

hanging almost under the ceiling on the wall. We liked listening to the radio: there was always merry music on it. The desk was right beneath this radio plate and when there was an interesting program, I got onto this desk to be closer to radio to listen to the program.

I remember famine in early 1930s. Our family hardly suffered from the famine. My parents received some miserable food packages each on his work. There was no sufficient food, but enough to not die from hunger. In 1932 starving people were escaping to towns from villages. There was bread sold at markets in towns, but it was impossible to buy any food in villages. Somehow those people managed to get some money to buy bread, they ate it and were dying in the streets. I remember I was 5 in 1932, I was sitting on the window sill in our apartment and saw how they were loading something on a truck. There was a club of homeless children across the street from our house. I didn't understand then what they were loading, but now I know those were corpses. Starved exhausted people came to this club where they could get some food. They ate it and died. From overeating.