

Rita Razumovskaya With Her Mother Serafima Kiselgof



This is a photo of my mother Serafima Kiselgof and me, Rita Razumovskaya, as a little girl. I think it was taken in Leningrad. This photo was taken in 1924, I'm about two years old here.

My mother was born in 1897. She graduated from a gymnasium with some medal: either gold, or silver. She not only told me about her school, she even showed me its building. This school was situated on Petrograd side, on Bolshoy Avenue, between Grebezkaya Street and Lev Tolstoy square. It used to be a famous gymnasium, located in a three-story house of a pale yellow color. She told me that they studied foreign languages a lot, and her friend Julia Vladimirovna Shishova spoke wonderful French, while my mother understood it, but never spoke it, because she didn't have enough practice. At this gymnasium many girls from quite noble families studied, however, there were some Jews in their class too, and they didn't go to Christian lessons

Mother taught Russian and literature. She graduated from the History and Philology Faculty of Leningrad University, she studied after the Revolution, and she finished her studies when I was little. Mother was a teacher her entire life, first, it seems to me, in a regular school, and later only in an evening one.

Mother did everything very diligently. When she started to do something, she learned very diligently and studied this new issue for a while, and then, finally, she could do it! Anyway, she was one of those people, who have 'bad hands.' She couldn't sew; she poked the needle wherever it

was possible. And Father, on the contrary, was very practical, despite the fact that he was a musician. So my mother never learned to sew and darn.

I was born in Leningrad on 20th March 1922. My parents first wanted to name me Rebecca after my grandmother, but Mother said, 'No, that isn't a nice name, and there is no need to stress her Jewish nationality.' So they decided to name me Rita, this wasn't short for Margarita, this was the full name. And then for a while I had to explain to everyone that I'm only Rita, nothing more. My parents read this name in one of Ibsen's plays.