

Emilia Kotliar With Kindergarten Children



My kindergarten, a nanny is holding me, I don't remember her name, I am the first from the left.

This photo was taken in Kazan' in 1928. Photographers often took photographs in kindergarten and charged little for their services.

I was born in Kazan', Russia, in 1925. In Kazan' my mother worked in zhensoviet (women's council) [editor's note: Women's councils - departments, included in Party organs at the direction of the party Central Committee in 1918.

Their members were women activists and their tasks included ideological work with women industrial employees and peasants with the aim of their socialist education. Reorganized in 1929] with education of Tatar women.

They didn't know Russian and were taught in likbez schools. We rented an apartment with three big rooms in a private house. There was a small kitchen. There was a real big stove with oven forks, wood and cast iron pots. Water was delivered to houses in barrels.

There was a cellar with huge bottle green pieces of ice in it. There was food stored on them. The cellar was a very tempting place: there was sour cream in ceramic pots, milk and pelmeni dumplings. It was a very delicious cellar.

My father was sent to study in Moscow in 1931 and our family followed him there: my mother, I and our nanny. The nurse was with us since I turned 2 and stayed 14 years.

We lived out of town. I liked it there. There was a wooden house, so mysterious, in the woods. There were pine trees. We rented this "izba" hut, but then my mother was accommodated in a hostel and so was my father.

They lived in different rooms on different floors and since children were not allowed to stay in hostels there were always problems with my presence there.

My mother lived with some girls in her room and I was with them. Later I went to a kindergarten. Children could stay there overnight, but it turned out, this was not for me. I was withering away there. Nobody actually looked after me or how I ate there. Our family was poor.

In 1934 my father died. Four years later my mother received a room in a communal apartment in Moscow where we lived until 1966.