

Feiga Aizman With Her Sister Libe And Mother Tobe-Leya Aizman



From left to right: my sister Libe, my mother Tobe-Leya Aizman and I. The picture was taken when Mother got the second room in our apartment in Riga and my younger sister Libe came to us from Riga orphanage. The picture was taken in our new room in 1953.

Mother had a hard life after the war. When she came back to Riga, it turned out that our pre-war apartment was occupied. It was on the first floor and it was remodeled into a cobblers'. Of course, nobody was going to close it down to return the lodging to Mother. She was given a room in a communal apartment, in the basement. It was small and damp. It was hard to squeeze in even a small bed there. Mother didn't work before war as she was fully provided by dad. She didn't have any occupation, so she became a maid. She did odd jobs: cleaning, laundry. Of course she got a skimpy fee, but it was enough for food, at any rate not to die from hunger. My younger sister Libe was taken to the Riga orphanage, but I was older and they let me stay with Mom.

I entered Russian compulsory school. Mother couldn't make enough money to provide for the two of us. After school I worked. When I was 14, I worked hard. I was a baby-sitter, a janitor. I was given food for my job. When I washed dishes, I ate the bits and ends from the pots and plates. Of course, I wasn't sated, but I didn't starve. I also studied. Then one family offered me a job as maid to me for boarding. I agreed without hesitation. I grew up in the orphanage and knew how to work. I had a different attitude to life as compared to those who lived with their families all the time, being taken care of by the adults. I was transferred to the evening school. I worked in the daytime and in the evening I attended classes at school. Of course, my life was hard, but I understood that I should count only on myself.

Then I learned that in Ispolkom there was a labor commission and I went there. I was offered a job as courier - to take all kinds of papers to the offices. Then I became an accountant in the workshop. I liked the job. I joined the Komsomol at the factory and soon I was elected the secretary of the Komsomol committee. I was very active and could find a key to every person. I was respected by

all employees, who were mostly men. When I worked at the factory, I was not a maid any more. I started living with my mom. Then we were given another room in the same basement and Mother took my sister from the orphanage. The three of us started living together.

In spite of having a difficult life, Mother and I always marked Jewish holidays. It was sacred. We saved up money to buy chicken and fish for the holiday. We tried to mark it in accordance with the Jewish tradition. We also went to the synagogue.