

Remma Kogan And Her Brother Yuri Kogan



This is me and my brother, Yuri. This photo was taken in Odessa in 1935.

I was born in Kirovograd on 9 November 1925. We had a housemaid that looked after me. She lived with us for about three years. I can vaguely remember her. She didn't look young to me. She wasn't a tidy woman. I remember once stepping into my mother's galoshes and walking in the apartment when I slipped over an empty tin and injured my forehead. I still have a scar. In 1928 my father was sent to work in Odessa. In Odessa we lived in a communal apartment on the 3rd floor, in a house in Olgiyeskaya Street in the central part of Odessa. There was a bathroom, a toilet and coal stoked stoves. We made stocks of coal for winter. The other tenants of our apartment were Russian. They were the family of Znoiko: a wife and husband and their grown up daughter. We got along very well with them. A big Jewish family of the Bodners lived in the basement apartment in our house: there was a husband and wife and four children. There were three sisters: Friema, Rosa, Menia and brother Samuel. When my mother was to go to work and there was nobody to look after me my mother took me to the Bodners where I spent half a day. They were very poor. I remember that they gave me makukha [ground sunflower seed husk] to eat. During the Great Patriotic War Friema married a Polish Jew in evacuation and they moved to Poland. Friema lives in America now and her sisters Rosa and Menia live in Israel. Rosa often calls me. On the first floor of our house there was another family that were my parents' friends. The father of the family whose last name was Sosyura was an obstetrician. They didn't have children, but on New Year they arranged a party for their neighbors' children. I remember these parties since we always received gifts on them.

On 30 March 1933 my brother Yuri was born in Odessa. I went to school in 1934 when I turned 9 years old. I missed the first grade at school since I had to look after my baby brother at home. I went to school #5 in Mechnikov Street and then my parents sent me to school #28 in Perekopskaya Pobeda Street. Both school were Russian. We had very well qualified teachers. Many of my classmates were Jewish children, but I don't remember about teachers. My favorite teachers

were as follows: teacher of mathematic Georgi Khristoforovich Stoyanov and Ms. Kiriakiova, teacher of the Russian literature and language. She inspired me to read books by Pushkin, Lermontov, Chekhov, Kipling [English writer and Nobel laureate, author of *The Jungle Book* (1894) and *Just So Stories* (1902)]. I took piano lessons at the music school in the Scientists House. I had all excellent marks at school and was a pioneer. I didn't join Komsomol since nobody offered me to become a Komsomol member. I had two friends at school and they were both Jews: Inna Faiman and Zoya Lyubianskaya.