

Cecilia Dembo



This is my father's sister, Cecilia Dembo. She is 22 here. The photo was taken in Riga in 1926.

My father's younger sister Cecilia was born in Riga in 1904. When she was nine years old, she was run over by a street railway car and lost her leg; she had a prosthesis afterwards.

This circumstance left a certain imprint on her further personal life.

She had a good education, she finished a classical gymnasia in Riga, graduated from the medical faculty of Tartu University and later improved her education in Prague with Voyachek, who was very famous in the world of medicine.

She traveled a lot, went to Italy and France. Cecilia was a very good Otolaryngologist. She was a secular Jew, far from religion. She lived with her mother, my grandmother Sara, in Riga.

During the war, while in evacuation in the Urals, Cecilia worked in a polyclinic. After she returned to liberated Riga, she continued with her medical activity.

She treated the opera singers' vocal chord illness; she was on friendly terms with the famous tenor Alexandrovich, and knew the academician Tarle very well.

[Editor's note: E. V. Tarle (1875-1955): a famous Soviet historian of Jewish origin, one of the most prominent specialists in the history of Russia, France and international relations at the end of the 19th, beginning of the 20th century.]

Cecilia was an extraordinary person, though she didn't have any personal life; she was never married. She adopted and raised Alexander Genkin, her cousin's son, and gave him her last name.

Alexander was born in Paris, his French mother left him in his early childhood and then his father died.

Alexander Dembo became an artist, worked as a teacher at the Riga Academy of Arts, faculty of industrial aesthetics. I have his paintings at home. Cecilia died in Riga in 1981.