

Basya Chaika's Mother Rachel Gorenstein With Her Friend Manya



My mother, Rachel Gorenstein (on the right) with her friends as nurses. The photo was made in 1917 in Kiev. My mother, Rachel Gorenstein (Pan by husband), was the energy center of our family. She was born in 1897 in Kiev. She was the fourth and the most beautiful child of Moshe and Basya Gorenstein. As a baby she was taken around in a richly decorated stroller, and everyone said she was nice as a rose. Rose became her second, and then main name. After the war and till her death in 1954 she was officially (in documents) registered as Rozalia Moiseyevna. Her first twenty years of life my mother lived as a daughter of a big Kiev banker; she finished a very prestigious and very expensive gymnasium with honors; she knew foreign languages and wanted to continue her education. She dreamed of becoming a doctor. Moshe Gorenstein, however, explained to her that a good Jewish girl, even a very rich one, must be a good wife and mother, for which her education was already good enough. My mother felt offended at him for the rest of her life. After getting married she never worked outside the house. Grandfather Moshe did not live to see his daughter Rachel-Rose as a wife or as a mother. In 1918 he had already passed away, and my mother had no

proper Jewish wedding. (Kiev of 1918, with its pogroms and various gangs was not a good place for Jewish weddings). My mother immediately crossed to another life, and it was dangerous to remember or tell about that previous life during the Soviet times. My mother shared with me about herself and her father who was a banker only after the war, and she begged me to keep my mouth shut.