

Maya And Basia Kaganskaya



This is a picture of me and my mother Basia Kaganskaya. The photo was taken on my third birthday in Kiev in 1929. My parents got married in 1922. Although their families were religious, especially my mother's family, my father and mother were atheists. They just had a civil ceremony in a registry office. They lived in the house of my father's parents with Grandmother Pesia after their wedding. In 1924 my parents moved to Kiev. I think they moved looking for a better life and more job opportunities. Grandmother Pesia bought an apartment for them: two small rooms and a little kitchen in a basement in Podol. We had two rooms in a communal apartment and there was another family besides us. We had kerosene lamps to light the rooms, fetched water from a pump in the yard, and washed ourselves in a bowl in the kitchen. There was a toilet in the yard and there was a line to get there in the morning. Before I was born my mother had an abdominal pregnancy and when I was born my parents understood that I was their first and last child. I was born on 16th May 1926. My father called me Maya. There was huge unemployment in our country. My mother worked at the tin food plant and confectionery for some time. My father worked for a leather craftsman and after the liquidation of the NEP he couldn't find a job for a long time. In 1928 he decided to move to Tashkent hoping to find a job there. His sister, Malka, and her family and his mother lived there. My mother refused to follow him. She wanted to stay close to her parents, who often came to see her in Kiev. Finally my father left for Tashkent in 1928. At the beginning he came to see us once a year. He missed us and asked my mother to join him there. He said there weren't so many problems with getting a job there, but my mother was stubborn and didn't want to go. My father began to visit us less often and in 1939 he married a Russian woman and moved to Yoshkar-Ola.