

Leonid Karlinsky And His Mother Bertha Karlinskaya



My mother, Bertha Karlinskaya, with me, Leonid Karlinsky, not yet one year old. The photo is signed, 'To my husband and father. Lyonia and Betia.' This photo was taken in Kharkov in 1930, the year of my birth. Mama and I stayed in Kharkov with my mother's older sister, Ethel, while Papa went to Chuguev. Although my parents came from traditional Jewish families, they didn't observe any Jewish traditions. Neither my brother nor I were circumcised. I believe my father became a party member under the influence of my mother. We only spoke Russian at home, and even when my parents used some Yiddish words, it was meant as a joke, and with some sarcasm. I believe it

was because of my parents' attitude toward religion that my father's mother literally hated my mother. Besides coming from a poor family in the village, my mother had turned my father into an atheist and a communist. My father was ashamed of his Jewish origins. He always introduced himself as Mark Pavlovich or Mihail Pavlovich, but never by his Jewish name, Meyer Pinhusovich.