

Adolf Landsman



This is me riding a bicycle, given to me by my father as a birthday present. The picture was taken in Moscow in 1930.

I was born on 14th April 1924 in Nizhniy Novgorod. My parents called me Adolf. I don't have a Jewish name.

My father still worked in his shop with his brother Pavel. My mother was a housewife and took care of me. We were pretty well-off during the NEP times, and the Soviet regime encouraged

entrepreneurship. I remember hardly anything about my life in Nizhniy Novgorod. We left it for Moscow in 1928.

When we moved to Moscow, my parents decided to give me the best education possible. I went to a private German kindergarten, where there were eight to ten children. The group was organized by a German lady, from the Froebel Institute.

She wasn't young and had graduated from that institute before 1917. She spoke only German with us. Children were good at learning foreign languages and soon we spoke pretty good German. In the morning we went to her and brought food for the whole day. We went strolling with her. She played with us.

We didn't speak German only with her; we were supposed to communicate in German amongst ourselves. We were forbidden to speak Russian. Then we went back home and had lunch. She read books in German. Then we took some rest. I continued studying German at school.

When I went back home after the war my hatred towards the Germans was so strong that I couldn't stand hearing German speech and gradually I forgot the German language.

When I reached school age, my parents managed to send me to the best school in Moscow. It was the privileged school #25, where the children of the Party and the governmental elite studied. It was a hard time. There wasn't enough food but our school breakfasts were pretty good.

Before the revolution this school used to be a lyceum, and some teachers from that lyceum taught there. Of course, I wasn't aware that the children of governmental authorities went to our school. The teachers had the same attitude towards everybody. They treated everybody equally and in a good-wishing manner. I became a Young Octobrist in the first grade.