

Peter Rubinshtein



This is a picture of my father, Peter Rubinshtein, when he was professor at the Chair of Psychology at Kiev University. The photo was taken in Kiev in 1922. My parents met at the theater. My father came to Kiev on the invitation of Kiev University to lecture on psychology. My mother was a very elegant woman. She wasn't a beauty, but she was attractive. My father was a very handsome and elegant man. They fell in love with each other and got married in 1915. They had a small wedding party. They didn't have a Jewish wedding ceremony. After the wedding my father moved to Kiev. He became a lecturer on psychology at Kiev University. There was no anti-Semitism, and he got this job easily. My mother was a housewife. My father was very enthusiastic about the Revolution of 1917. He believed revolutionary ideas to be the expression of justice. He was 30 and a professor

of psychology. He was the youngest professor at the university. He was called a 'red professor', probably because of his devotion to Soviet ideas. My parents rented a small two-bedroom apartment in Shevchenko Boulevard in Kiev. It's a very beautiful street lined with Lombardy poplar trees. I was born in Kiev in 1920. In 1923 my father was offered a job in Kharkov. He was to be a lecturer at Kharkov University and take part in the development of optimal psychological occupational recommendations. He agreed, and we moved to Kharkov. Kharkov was a big industrial and cultural center. It was the capital of Ukraine at that time. There were few Jews in Kharkov and they were assimilated Jews like my parents. We spoke Russian in the family. My parents were atheists. Or, to be more precise, my father was a convinced atheist. He didn't observe any Jewish traditions, and we didn't celebrate any Jewish holidays. My mother tried to observe some Jewish traditions. She didn't go to the synagogue, but she fasted on Yom Kippur. When we managed to get some matzah on Pesach my mother only ate matzah. But she had bread for me and my father for Pesach. I wasn't raised Jewish. My parents believed religiosity to be a vestige of the past. They didn't teach me Yiddish for the same reason. They weren't party members, but we always celebrated Soviet holidays in our family: 1st May and 7th November [October Revolution Day]. My mother made a festive dinner, and we had guests. They were mainly my father's colleagues. We also had birthday parties.