

## Sima Shvarts With Her Cousins Boris And Mark Kamenkovich



This is me with my elder cousin Boris and younger cousin and Mark Kamenkovich, the sons of my mother's sister Rakhil. The photo was taken in 1925 in Kiev. The husband of my mother's sister Rakhil was a high-ranking party worker. They lived in Kiev. In the 1920s there were many private houses. So, this man told us that there were several flats owned by somebody called Parkhomovsky in Zhilyanskaya Street. And Rakhil and her husband had no flat in Kiev. So, he went

to Parkhomovsky, intimidated him with something and said that if he didn't give him the flats, they would be confiscated from him. So, Parkhomovsky gave him two flats - their family stayed in one, and my mother and I, in the other one. They had two sons, Boris and Mark Kamenkovich. They were younger than I but we were good friends. We remained friends for life. Boris came to Kiev after the war. Before the war Boris (who danced very well) had been taken into a famous dancing band and spent the whole war in it. They went to every front and performed there. After the war the band stayed in Moscow. As soon as Kiev was liberated, all the Kiev residents in that band went to their native town for a few days. That's when we saw Boris. He came to our house, wearing his uniform and looking very important in it. Other people were living in the flat and all our furniture was missing. They got so scared when they saw him! Boris asked them, 'Tell me, who took our furniture. I need to get it back before my parents come back to Kiev'. And he was able to collect a wardrobe, a bed, chairs and a table - a lot of furniture. He took it back to his flat. We settled there and lived there until his parents came back. Boris became a very famous man in Kiev's theaters - he was the chief ballet master of the Opera Theater and of the Ukrainian Drama Theater. He was married to a stage director, famous in her circles, Irina Molostova. Everybody treated him nicely in the theater. Last year, when he celebrated his 80th birthday, a special celebration was organized in the theater in his honor - many Ukrainian workers of culture were invited; his son came from Moscow (he works there in a theater, too). Unfortunately, Irina Molostova died several years ago. When my cousin Boris introduced me to his friends he always said, 'This is my cousin Sima - an iron lady'. Boris died very recently, and I was left absolutely alone. His brother Mark lives in Germany.