

Maria Yanova With Her Daughters Evgenia Lebenson And Marina Sineokaya



This is my mother Maria Yanova with my elder sister Evgenia (on the left) and holding me in her arms. The picture was taken in Moscow on the porch of our house in 1924. In 1921 my elder sister, Evgenia, was born. I was born in 1922. I was named Marina, a name with starting with the letter 'M', in honor of my recently deceased grandfather Moses. When my sister and I were small, my mother didn't work and raised us. She started working when we went to school. She was employed at the publishing house 'Goslitizdat'. She worked there until retirement. She started her career as a typist, and then she became the administrative secretary. She managed work of the editors,

translators, typists, and distributed scripts. In general, she was responsible for the technical and organizational part of work. My mother was acquainted with many writers and poets. My mother was the most experienced employee of the publishing house, and when a new manager came, he directed people to my mother when they had certain issues to tackle. Russian is the native tongue of my sister, my mother, and I. My parents spoke only Russian with us and between themselves. Of course, we heard Yiddish as it was spoken by my maternal grandparents, my father's brother Ion, and his wife. My sister and I were raised in the spirit of internationalism. We knew that we were Soviet people and we had no idea about our nationality. My mother wanted my sister and me to get a very good education. We weren't very well-off; during our childhood my father was the only bread-winner of the family and his salary wasn't very high. My mother hired a music teacher for my sister and I, but we didn't meet her expectations, we weren't interested in playing interminable gamut and spend hours at the piano. When my mother realized that we wouldn't succeed in music, she found a German teacher for us. She was a German lady, who had lived in Russia for a while. She came to us and we weren't allowed to speak Russian during our class, only German. Such a tough teaching method turned out to be very fruitful. Soon, my sister and I began to speak German fluently. The knowledge acquired from the German teacher was very useful to me in school and later on in the institute.