

Irina Golbreich With Her Parents Boris And Rachil Mikhelson



This is our family: my father Boris Mikhelson, my mama Rachil and me. We were going to some place, and my father's brother went to see us off to the railway station. He photographed us in the carriage of the train. This photo was taken in Yurmala in 1940.

In 1940 Latvia was annexed to the USSR. I remember how the Soviet forces came to Riga. There were tanks and trucks, with the military wearing Soviet military uniforms, moving along the streets. People standing on sidewalks greeted them waving their hands and throwing flowers. My parents and I also went there. I was shouting greetings with the others and waved my hands to the passing tanks and trucks. I remember the feeling of admiration generated by the powerful capacity of the Soviet army.

My parents were for the annexation of Latvia to the Soviet Union. They never joined the Party, but they believed that life would be better in Soviet Latvia, that discrimination would be eliminated, and people would be equal and free. They were not alone in their faith. However, I don't think our life was different during the Soviet regime. We lived in the same apartment, and my father worked at the same factory, which already belonged to the Soviet people. I went to the same kindergarten. There were no improvements, but things were not getting worse either.