

Olga Barskaya And Her Second Husband Nikolay Rukoyatkin



I, Galina Barskaya, in the middle, with my aunt Olga Barskaya and her second husband, Nikolay Rukoyatkin. The photo was taken in 1929 in Novogeorgiyevsk.

I grew up in my aunt's family. Later, when I was studying at school, Aunt Olya got married again. Her husband was Russian – Nikolay Ivanovich Rukoyatkin. During the Civil War he fought and was awarded with medals. He was a member of the Communist Party and a very honored man. My aunt went to live with him in Novogeorgiyevsk. Her husband was working there as chairman of a furniture artel, and their life was good. I was left in Kremenchug; they did not take me with them. My father also lost any interest in me – he married another woman and left Kremenchug. My sister Yekaterina moved to Lugansk, while my brother entered the naval college. So, I was left alone, with no rights.

At school I had a friend, Dora Marakon. I began to live with them. They had two rooms – a smaller and a bigger one. They heated the smaller one, but I slept in the bigger room, which was not heated. My bed was standing by the window. I got sick there and had very high fever. After that I lost my voice. I don't even know whether Dora's family was paid for taking me, but I assume that they simply had pity on me. It was a Jewish family of very kind people. They were poor, but they had pity on me, and I stayed with them for several years.

As I already mentioned, people of many nationalities lived in our town. There was a Catholic Church not far from our house, and when I was young, I played with the Catholic priest's daughters. The priest was a very gloomy and strict man. We were scared of him. But his wife and daughters treated me very well. I never had dolls to play with, so these girls and I sewed dolls from the leftovers of some clothes and played with them. Their mother always fed me.

I liked studying at school. We had Jewish, Ukrainian, Russian, and Polish students, and everyone treated each other well. Our teachers also made no difference between children of different nationalities. I was an excellent student and was about to enter the eighth grade. At that time, only good students could study at the eighth grade. So, after the seventh grade, a group of us, good students, was transferred to another school, which was located even further. I went there several times and realized that I could not study there. So, I quit school and entered a technical college. I liked technical education classes even at our secondary school. I was always good at them. So, in the college I learned to work at a lathe and I enjoyed working at it.

At school I joined the ranks of young pioneers. I liked all gatherings of pioneers, but I was never sent to a pioneer summer camp. At the college I became an active Komsomol member and I also worked as a pioneer leader at our school.