

Nikhama Frumkina With Her Parents Pavel Frumkin And Gita Frumkina



This photo was taken in Bryansk, in a photo studio in 1933, when I (in the center) was four years old.

To the left of me sits my father Pavel (Peisakh) ben Elimelekh, a young bookkeeper then; to the right - my mother, Gita Moiseevna Frumkina (nee Goz), a housewife.

My father Frumkin, was born in Pogor in 1902, though 1903 is written down in his birth certificate. From the age of three he studied in a cheder in Pogor, upon the termination of which he was sent to study in a yeshivah in another town, and he became a yeshivah bocher.

Father told me, how with other yeshivah bocherim they went to have dinner in 'makhuntek,' that is in various Jewish families. It was in accordance with an important precept called tsdaki, but in different families it was followed with different degrees of generosity: some people invited them to their own table, others let them eat with the servants.

My mum was born in Radul, Kiev province, in 1903. She was one of four children in the family. Having moved to Bryansk with her parents after the revolution, she finished accounting courses, and worked as a bookkeeper in one company, but after my birth in 1929, Mother became a housewife and was taking care of my education.

In my childhood I somehow made friends only with non-Jewish children, and I've never felt any anti-Semitism. My acquaintance with the Jewish traditions was going on indirectly, only through communication with my grandfathers and grandmothers.

I heard nothing of Zionism when I was a girl: my father's Zionist past had always been thoroughly concealed from me. I spent the biggest part of my childhood in evacuation and it is of this period

that I mostly have recollections.

Studying at the accounting courses Daddy got acquainted with Mum, courted her for five years, and in 1927 they got married. My parents had a real chuppah, according to all rules of a religious Jewish wedding, organized in Feiga's apartment, the sister of Grandmother Ita Markovna.

Feiga and her husband Neukh were well-off people, they had no children. Neukh offered his help regarding chuppah arrangements in his home and paid all the bills. He died one year after my parents' wedding, before I was born.

A few days before my birth Mother had a dream: the deceased Uncle Neukh was complaining, 'Now, when I'm dead, no one even thinks of remembering me...' Having woken up, Mother decided to name her future baby in honor of her uncle.

A girl was born - and was given the name Nikhama. Another thing I remember from my mother's words is that when the bride was supposed to weep at a certain moment under the chuppah, showing her grief due to parting with her parents' home, Mother couldn't help bursting out laughing...