# Elena's Father



My father Josef was born in 1892 in Dyusseldorf.

He finished a secondary school (common, not Jewish) and, odd as it was, sang in a choir of some Orthodox church. In Russia it was hard for a Jew and, what was more, from the Caucasian region, to enter an institute.

So after finishing of a secondary school father went away to Berlin and entered the Medical Institute there in 1911.

As grandpa had a big family, which he could hardly support, my father had to pay both for his living and study.

He worked as a bartender; in other words, sold beer in a bar. Unfortunately, father didn't succeed in completing his study in Germany.

In 1914, as everybody knows, World War I burst out and all Russian nationals were sent away from Germany. My father arrived in Kiev and entered the medical department of the Kiev State University. He graduated from it in 1917. At that university he met my mum.

Mum became a first year student at the time when my father was a third-year student - of the same department, - and in 1917 they got married.

At the beginning of 1918 my parents left for the Red Army. The father was already a doctor, and the mother had time to complete only three years and became a military medical attendant.

During the whole Civil War my parents fought on the South Front.

In the south they served until 1922. In 1922 my father was transferred to serve in Leningrad. At that time many people left Leningrad as there was not enough food, and there were a lot of empty flats.

No one wanted to buy them, because no one wanted to live in a poorly supplied, non-heated city. So flats were easy to get, and my parents were able to get a large flat cheaply. It was more then 200 sq. m. flat on Ryleeva Street (at the corner with Mayakovskaya Street) on the second floor, not far from the caserns, in which my father was serving.