

Boris Iofik, His Mother And Sister



This photograph taken in 1937 in Yalta shows my mother, my sister and me.

Here I'd like to tell you about my parents and about our life.

My Mom's name was Rakhel Zalmanovna, I am sorry not to remember her maiden name. She was born approximately in 1900 and died in 1958 in Leningrad.

My father's name was Moissey Borissovich Iofik. He was born also approximately in 1900. I do not remember the place where my parents were born. But I know that they got acquainted and married in OPOCHKA.

All her life long Mom was a housewife. She finished only a secondary school.

Father studied somewhere, but I do not remember where. He worked in distribution network. In OPOCHKA he was a seller, and later in Leningrad he became a shop manager. He took part in the Soviet-Finnish war [1] and managed to come home alive.

Later father was mobilized and took part in the Great Patriotic War, though by that time he was already not a young man. He perished at the front-line in 1944 somewhere in Estonia.

Before that he was wounded and spent a lot of time in hospital. He sent us photographs from the hospital. Later he left the hospital and was sent to the front-line again. In 1944 we received a notification that he had died a hero's death.

I do not know why father decided to leave OPOCHKA for Leningrad. We moved in 1930, when I was only 6 years old. My uncle and aunt remained in OPOCHKA and died there. For a short period of time we lived in the suburb of Leningrad (in a small settlement, I do not remember its name), but then arrived in Leningrad.

We settled in a communal apartment in the city centre. Father worked, and Mom kept the house. Our apartment was very large: a lot of families lived there. Mom worked hard at home: in communal apartments neighbors were on duty in turn. It meant that each family had to clean the apartment during a certain period of time: a week per each family member.

We were 4, therefore Mom had to clean the kitchen, the long-long corridor, the bathroom, the toilet the whole month. She also had to solve all the problems with food: it was not easy to buy food (because of its shortage).

Mom often had to stand in line to buy this or that. Don't forget that at that time there were food cards! I remember that some time later we moved to another apartment: also communal and also very large.

I lived in communal apartments till 1985, when authorities gave me this flat (it happened because I was a disabled former soldier). And Mom remained a housewife till my father's death. After that she started working as a news vendor.

I became a schoolboy in Leningrad. My school was very good. It was situated rather far from our house: it was necessary to cross several busy streets, but from the very first class nobody saw me off. It seems to me that at that time children were more independent, it was not customary to take too much care of them.

I studied well. I was interested in exact science: physics and mathematics. I had got a lot of school friends; unfortunately all of them had already died. I remember our teachers hazily, but I still keep in my mind the face of our form master. I guess I can recognize her if we meet. But, you see now I can meet nobody of them: all of them have already gone!

I remember that our teachers were good. They were serious and respectful towards children. We had no problem during studies: if we did not understand something in class, we had an opportunity to ask for explanation, to have extra studies. Our teachers never refused.

On the whole, my school memoirs are pleasant. I remember that we often went to the cinema. We preferred first shows: tickets were much cheaper than in the evening. I did not go in for sports seriously, but we used to play football with boys in our yard. We never had real footballs (for us it was an impermissible luxury), we used some rag balls. I can imagine that at present children would only laugh at our balls!

I never was a hooligan; most probably I was as good as pie. I always had a lot of friends: both Russians and Jews. Nationality of my friends was of no importance for me.

Our family was united. I do not remember any conflicts between parents or between parents and children.