

Vera Dreezo's Mother Ghita Minevich With Her Friend



My mother Ghita Minevich with her friend, photographed when having a stroll. Kiev, 1920s.

My mother Ghita Mikhailovskaya was born on 18 November 1904. She studied in a grammar school like her sisters. My mother told me that before the revolution they studied Hebrew and, so it seems, Yiddish that she has forgotten in the course of time. I only can't remember whether they had a teacher at home or studied the languages in grammar school.

Grandmother died of typhoid in 1916 when my mother was 12. After she died grandfather married a Russian housemaid. She was a plain woman and had no education. Wealthier Jews used to have non-Jewish housemaids. The name of this housemaid was Tosia. After he remarried grandfather stopped supporting his older children. He probably thought they already could take care of themselves. My mother didn't keep in touch with grandfather and his second family.

My mother and her sisters were having a hard time, especially during the Civil war. My mother couldn't complete her education having to support her younger sisters. She worked at fairs and exhibitions as a cashier or did any work she could get. My mother and her sisters were renting a room. Basically, my mother told me very little about this period of her life. I cannot imagine how they survived these hardships. In 1925 or so my mother began to work as a cashier in a grocery store in the center of Kiev where she met my father.