

Isabella Karanchuk's Mother Raya Lerman, Father Yefim Lerman With Their Friends



This is my mother Raya Lerman (the second from the left), my father Yefim Lerman (the third from the left) with their friends from the theatrical studio in Mogilyov. This photo was taken in Mogilyov in 1926. My mother Haika (she was called Raya in the soviet period) was the youngest in the family. She was born in Mogilyov in 1908. My mother finished 6 or 7 forms of the Jewish school. She could read and write and learned Russian and Byelorussian. At the age of about 15 mama had to go to work. She found a job at the confectionery. She was very fond of theater. There was a Jewish amateur theater at the club of a factory in Mogilyov and mama was one of the leading actresses in it. They staged Jewish plays, mainly of Sholom Aleichem. My mother must have been very talented. She was praised high and even the local Jewish newspaper wrote about her talent. My father Yefim (Jewish name Haim) Lerman was born in 1905. He studied in cheder and then became a shoemaker's assistant for a Jewish shoemaker in his shop. He met my mother in the club where my mother acted in the theater and my father played the tuba in the orchestra. The young people fell in love with each other. They were photographed together for the first time in Mogilyov in 1924 - my mother was 16, and father - 19 years old. I don't know exactly, when my parents got married. My father was already a Komsomol member and protested against having a wedding at the synagogue. They registered their wedding in a registry office and had a small wedding party with relatives and friends at home. Shortly after the wedding my parents moved to Kharkov where my father went to work in a shoe shop. I was born on 8 August 1928. My parents rented a room in a communal apartment where my parents slept behind a curtain. Soon my father received a small two-bedroom apartment in a one-storied house. My father was a member of the Communist Party that he joined in 1928. Thought he had little education he was a born manager. From a plain worker he was promoted to supervisor of the shoe shop providing services the families of government officials. In 1934 we moved to Kiev because the capital of Ukraine moved from Kharkov to Kiev and our family moved there, too. My father was appointed director of the 'Kommunar' governmental shoe shop. In Kiev my father received a big room in a seven-bedroom communal apartment on the fourth (last) floor of a brick house located in the yard. We lived in the very center of the city near the Ukrainian Drama Theater. My parents went to this and to the Opera

Theaters. My mother and father often went to the Jewish Theater located quite near from us. They never missed one performance. My parents also took me with them, probably trying to fill up the gap in my Jewish education.