

## Maya Pivovar With Her School Friends



I, Maya Pivovar, with my school friends, I don't remember their names, I am sitting in the first row in the center. We decided to get photographed on the occasion of finishing the 7th form in May 1941, few weeks before the Great Patriotic War, we are all alive and happy. Kiev, 1941.

I, Maya Pivovar, was born in 1927. I was born and grew up in Kiev. We lived with our parents in a huge communal apartment before the Great Patriotic War. There were five other families living there. We had plain furniture: a desk, a divan with a high back and a cupboard. There was plain crockery. There was a plate-shaped radio hanging almost under the ceiling on the wall. We liked listening to the radio: there was always merry music on it. The desk was right beneath this radio plate and when there was an interesting program, I got onto this desk to be closer to radio to listen to the program. Our family didn't celebrate Jewish traditions. My parents were members of the party and atheists. In 1926 my father joined the Communist Party. My mother was a member of the communist Party since 1932. Our family spent our leisure time like many other Soviet families. My mother's relatives visited us - they were a big family. We got together on birthdays, on Soviet holidays and new Year. Of course, we went to the theater and to the cinema. I remember the theater of Red army in Merengovskaya, present Zankovetskaya, Street, and the Children's Theater in Karl Marx Street.

My father took me to the first form: my mother was working. This was an ordinary Russian school, the nearest to our home. I studied well and enjoyed it. I was good at all subjects. There were 40 children in my class, there were also Jewish children, but we never gave it a thought then, we were friends, ran to the beach in summer, played with a ball and there was no segregation before the war.

I had finished seven forms before the Great Patriotic War. As far as I can remember, my parents were talking about a war somewhere abroad, but this seemed to me to be far away from where we lived and was not going to happen to us. I don't think my parents realized how serious this was, or they wouldn't have allowed my grandfather and grandmother (on my mother's side) to stay in Kiev when Germans came. I remember well beginning of the war on 22 June 1941, I was already 14

years old. We were on vacations and were walking with our neighbor in a park, it was in the morning and she said: 'They say, they were dropping bombs at night on the Post-Volynskaya station out of town'. His was something wild to me: bombs in peaceful time! We went home, and at 12 o'clock in the afternoon Molotov spoke on the radio, he announced that the war began.