

Bertha Isayeva



This is me, Bertha Isayeva, at the age of 16. This photo was taken in Odessa, in 1938. I was a pioneer and had all excellent marks and my portrait was on the board of honor in the children's cinema theater named after Frunze. I had all excellent marks at school. I liked geometry and algebra and I was fond of literature. We had a nice teacher of the Russian language. She came from an old family of intelligentsia. Unfortunately, I don't remember her name. We listened to her with rapt attention. I liked Pushkin very much. We read a lot. We read newspapers and magazines at home. My friends were my classmates and my neighbor's children. I didn't care what nationality they were. At home we didn't celebrate Soviet holidays, though my father was a communist, but there were mandatory celebrations at school. We were raised patriotic. We celebrated October revolution anniversary. We went to parades. There was music and dancing in the streets. We were in high spirits and there was a holiday mood everywhere. In summer my parents sent me to a pioneer camp. My father made all necessary arrangements at his work for us to go to a camp. I went to a different camp every year, but all of them were at the seashore. Every summer I looked

forward to going to a camp. There were children from Moscow and Leningrad. One year about thirty children came. We made friends and cried when time to say 'good byes' came. It was a full and interesting life. We had sports holidays. I was a lissome girl and they even called me a 'girl without bones'. I actually folded in two reaching my heel with my head. I also went in for basketball in our palace of pioneers. We trained in rented gyms in town schools.