

Rita Razumovskaya With Her Sister Irina And Friends Of Her Mother



This a photo of me (first from right in the first row), my sister Irina Rozen, nee Kiselgof (first from left in the first row), and two of Mother's friends, Frieda Chernomordikova (the left one in the second row) and Julia Shishova (the right one in the second row). The picture was taken in Leningrad in the 1950s.

My mother invited friends; her best friends were a Russian woman and a Jewish woman. They studied together with my mother in gymnasium, and later they frequently came to visit us. This Jewish woman lived in Moscow; her name was Frieda Davidovna Chernomordikova. In times of Lenin she was the secretary in Smolny, and later she became a guide and a secretary of

Shelgunov, the blind Bolshevik. Frieda lived her entire life together with her brother and his family. She was a surprisingly kind person, she was very clever and kind, but she wasn't used to everyday life. When she was old, she switched the primus stove on according to written instructions only. 'Genya, where is my instruction?' Genya, her brother, brought the instruction; she opened the paper, put on the glasses and began to read... The second friend, Julia, was a bit less intelligent, even though she was from a noble family. She washed me and was my tutor when I was a child and later she raised me.

I was born in Leningrad on 20th March 1922. My parents first wanted to name me Rebecca after my grandmother, but Mother said, 'No, that isn't a nice name, and there is no need to stress her Jewish nationality.' So they decided to name me Rita, this wasn't short for Margarita, this was the full name. And then for a while I had to explain to everyone that I'm only Rita, nothing more. My parents read this name in one of Ibsen's plays.

I have two sisters. One of them, Galina, is five years younger than me, she was born on 24th February 1927, and the second one, Irina, was born in 1938, when our mother was forty-two. I remember that I was studying in the tenth grade, and they called me out of lessons, because my sister Irina was born, and I wasn't happy about it. When Galina was born, I asked my parents to take her away, to take her back. They named one of my sisters after some woman called Galina, whom my father liked, as a young man – maybe, he had some secret love story, I don't know exactly – and why they named my second sister Irina, I have no idea. My sisters went to another school, which was situated on Volkhovskoy Road.