

Irina Aizenberg With Her Mother Sara Gurovich And Her Brother Georgi Gurovich



This is me, my mother Sara Gurovich and my brother Georgi. This photo was taken in Odessa in 1940.

I, Irina, was born on 3rd January 1929, two years after my parents got married. My parents were not religious. We only spoke Russian in the family. My father was a member of the Communist Party. When he joined the Party or for what reason was never discussed in our family. Shortly after I was born my father went to work as an accountant at the Headquarters of Odessa Railroad.

In 1933, my father got an assignment to go to a village near Odessa to work on the improvement of agriculture. My mother and I followed him there. We had a small house and kept livestock in that village. We kept a pig and a German breed cow with black spots. It gave 22 liters of milk per day. We left some for the family and gave the rest to the sovkhos [8](#). My mother also kept geese, ducks

and chickens, so we also had eggs. My parents told me that this livestock helped us to live through the period of famine in Ukraine in 1933 [9](#). My father worked as an accountant in the sovkhos and he also received food products for his work.

We moved back to Odessa in 1936. My mother was pregnant and this same year she gave birth to my younger brother Georgi. In Odessa my father continued working as an accountant at the railroad headquarters.

In 1936 I went to Ukrainian school #118 near the Privoz market. I studied in this school before the Great Patriotic War. That this was a Ukrainian school helped me to learn Ukrainian. Children and teachers were of various nationalities. We took no notice of anybody's nationality. I can remember one Jewish teacher. His last name was Urman. He taught the Russian literature. He was a brilliant teacher and schoolchildren liked him a lot.

I remember the ceremony of admission to pioneers in the gym at school: unfortunately, my stocking slipped down and I was trying to fix it before anybody noticed it. It sounds funny now, but it was so serious when it happened. There were many clubs in our school. I liked singing and led the chorus at school. We sang pioneer and Komsomol songs. We also had military training at school. We were trained to disassemble and assemble a rifle and put on gas masks.