

Maya Pivovar's Father Mikhail Pivovar



My father Mikhail Pivovar. This photo was taken on the occasion of my father's birthday. Kiev, 1926.

My father's name was Mikhail Pivovar. He came from Kornin Zhytomir region [about 160 km from Kiev]. My father's parents died from some disease and hunger in 1919. I don't know exactly where this happened. All I know about them is that my grandfather's name was Yakov. My father had eight brothers and sisters, but I have no information about them and don't even know their names. My father was the youngest. He was born in 1904. He finished four years of the Russian state school in Kornin. There was an annual quota in this school for one Jew to be admitted each year. My father managed to enter this school and finish it. My father was 15 years old, when his parents died. He had to earn his living somehow. He became a teacher. So, in 1919 he was a teacher. My father traveled from one village to another where he had pupils who were children of wealthier farmers, or kulaks, as they were called at the time. He taught them to read and write in Russian. Then he moved to Kiev. I don't know how it happened or why, he probably told me, but I don't remember. My father entered a rabfak school and worked as a clerk in the regional pharmacy department. My father was a very nice person and a very sociable one. Everybody liked him. He met my mother in 1925 and they got married. They didn't have a traditional Jewish wedding. They were the children of their time and didn't observe any traditions. My parents lived not far from where my father was working, in the center of the city, in a communal apartment with neighbors.

My father worked in the regional pharmacy department till the middle 1930s, I guess, before he went to work at the Kiev experimental institute of endocrinology. He was production manager. In

Ukraine, and probably in the USSR there were two such institutes: one in Kharkov and one in Kiev. My father finished the extramural department of the Pharmaceutical College in Kiev. In 1941 he failed to take state exams due to the war and he never obtained a document about graduation from this college. My mother continued to work at the garment factory where he was promoted to the position of a forewoman and she earned well already. My parents earned well and we were a family of an average wealth. We didn't live in luxury, but we were not needy either.