

Frida Dembo



This is my mother, Frida Dembo, nee Sivashinkaya, in her youth.

She is 17 here. She is dressed up: laced-up high heels with buttons, a beautiful skirt and white blouse, a chain with a pendant and a bow in her hair.

She wasn't married yet when this photo was taken in 1918 in Petrograd.

My mother, Frida Moiseyevna Dembo, was born in St. Petersburg in 1901 and was the eldest child in the family. She finished a gymnasium and entered the Live Word Institute, such was the name of today's Drama Institute at that time.

She was taught by the famous actor Davydov and in spite of her young age, promising in the typical theatrical role of old women in Ostrovsky's plays.

[Editor's note: A. N. Ostrovsky (1823-1886): Russian playwright, whose plays, both tragedies and comedies, laid the foundation for realistic Russian drama.]

She had a very well-pronounced artistic talent and she studied well; she liked it all very much. When she married my father, Gerasim Demob, she was only 19 years old. They got married in 1920.

My mother was very elegant, fine-molded. She was a sociable person, very communicative and artistic. She sang well - low soprano - had a fine pitch, unlike my father and imitated Vertinsky wonderfully, including his gestures.

She had an imperious temper, as all Sivashinskys, sometimes she was a despot; she liked to have everything done her own way.

However, at the same time she was rather delicate and didn't worm herself into anybody's soul. My parents were educated and modern people; they weren't religious.