

Inna Shif Rajskaya At Her Grandfather's Home



In this photo I am three years old. I am visiting my grandfather in Minsk. I am sitting in a drawing room in a Viennese armchair, which has remained in my memory my entire life. I was born in Leningrad in 1933 and was reared for the most part at home. I don't have any brothers or sisters. Unfortunately, I don't know anything about how my parents met or about their wedding. At first they didn't have anywhere to live and rented a tiny room. After two years a room in the flat where my father's brother [Elkona] was living become vacant, and my parents took it. That is where I was born. We lived together in the same flat with my uncle's family until the war broke out in 1941. The family was a religious one and followed all the traditions. We observed Rosh-Hashana, Pesakh, Hanukkah and other holidays. My father's cousin (who also lived in Leningrad) was a frequent guest in our house, and we always ate well. But I don't think we followed the laws of kashrut, and neither

my parents nor uncle attended synagogue. From the age of five I attended a German kindergarten not far from our house. There two sisters ? both former teachers ? taught us to read and write, and they also taught us German; my uncle [Elkona] insisted on that, as he had a perfect command of German and wanted me to know it, too. In 1941 I was sent into evacuation with children of the employees of the Mariinsky theatre. These children were leaving for evacuation, and I was taken with them through family connections. During the evacuation I was at first in an orphanage near Kostroma, then the orphanage was moved to Kostroma itself. In September of 1941 Mom arrived; she took me and we together to the Novotroitsk settlement in the Urals, where her distant relative Abram Alexandrovich Dobrovinsky, was a site manager of the building of the Orsko-Halilovsky metallurgical works.