

Lubov Ratmanskaya's Younger Sister Nadya Arefyeva



My younger sister Nadya Arefyeva. The photo was taken in Kiev in the 1930s. Nadya was born in Kiev in 1917. At the end of 1917 we came to Kiev, to my father's parents. Later, because my father was an embroiderer and his work was in demand, my parents found a flat. It was a 5-storey building made of bricks. We lived on the first floor, but it was high. We had a separate flat. There was one small room, which my brother and I often entered through the window. It was hard to climb through that window, but my brother could do it. Then we had a big room and the third room

opened from here, but it was right next to the toilet, so it was practically impossible to live in it. We lived there for a short time but then it became impossible - we hardly ever entered it. To get to the kitchen we had to go downstairs, to the end of the long corridor. The kitchen was small, but it was ours, separate from the neighbors. Our life was very hard because when the Reds, the Whites or the Poles came it was hard for my parents to decide whom they should embroider for and whom not. When the NEP began life became better. We even had enough to eat: we had white bread, butter, and when mother went to the market, I usually went with her. But in general we were always thin and weak and never had proper clothes. Vera was sick almost all the time. We had one coat that our mother sewed for us from an overcoat, and we wore it in turns when we had to go to school. My brother and sisters and me went to music school. We got into the music school very simply. Abram sang in the choir of the Opera and the leader of the choir once asked him, 'Abram, do you have any brothers or sisters?' He said, 'Yes, I have sisters.' The teachers said, 'Why don't you bring them here?' So, we came and were tested and admitted. All of us, even Nadya who couldn't walk very well yet. I was her tutor. I always held her by the hand. We were taken by different teachers: Abram was taken by Rabinovich, Vera and I were taken by Zovitskaya, and Nadya was taken by Israilevich. But Nadya couldn't be taught music. She had a musical ear, just like Vera and Abram. And she never wanted to play from music. Everything she played, she played by ear. So, she finally ran away and didn't go to music school any more. She was a wonderful musician. Finally, she went to work as a sound technician at a film studio. During the war Nadya and her film studio [Dovzhenko] were evacuated to Tashkent. She insisted that mother and my sister Vera should also go there. My mother died there in 1942.