

Dimitri Kamyshan's Aunt Ida Zilberberg



My father's sister, Ida Zilberberg, photographed in Kharkov in 1925.

My grandparents had six children. The third child, Ida, born in 1898, finished grammar school and worked as deputy chief accountant at a plant. She was single and had no children. My father's sisters were spinsters, and they all loved me. I called them by their first names: Ida, Lilia and

Tamara, and I was allowed to do anything I wished. My aunts spoke fluent French. They taught me French and raised me. On certain days I was only allowed to talk French with them. They had rather attractive appearances, by the way, and why they were single - I don't know. They were all different. Only now, after so many years have passed, do I realize how much I loved them. Tamara, the youngest one, finished music school and was forcing me to learn to play the piano, although I had no ear for music. I learned to read notes a little. She used to hit me on my fingers when I made mistakes. She was very unbalanced. I guess she wanted a man next to her. In 1941 she was 31. She kept the house and everything in it very clean. Ida was very sickly. We had to take her to Sevastopol to get treatment for a very severe form of radiculitis. I remember that she was taken there on a stretcher and came back even without crutches.

Ida was shot by the Germans in Kharkov in December 1941.