

## Vera Dreezo



This is me photographed when I turned 6 months old. 1929, Kiev.

My father married my mother in 1928. My mother said they didn't have a traditional wedding, just a civil ceremony in a registry office. Shortly afterward my father became director of a trade center.

In 1929 my father received a room in a communal apartment with five other tenants in the center of Kiev. There was a big kitchen and a bathroom with a big closet shelves inside. The bathroom was used as wood storage - there was stove heating in the apartment before the Great Patriotic War. There were primus stoves and later - kerosene stoves and then when gas supply was installed there were two or three gas stoves brought into the kitchen to replace the old stoves. Two families shared one stove. There were arguments about who cleaned the stove and who didn't. Each family had a bulb in the hallway and an electric doorbell. It was bad when one rang a wrong bell or lit a wrong bulb! Tenants also took turns to wash the floor in the hallway. I remember washing the floors in this big hallway when I was in the tenth grade after the Great Patriotic War.

I was born in this room on 18 November 1929. I didn't go to a nursery school or kindergarten. My mother became a housewife when I was born. My father hired a nanny to help mother with the housework. Her name was Varia and she came from a Ukrainian village. At the beginning she slept in the mezzanine closet in the bathroom. There was a ladder to climb there and I used to climb this ladder visiting her there. I liked it there. She had an icon and some other little things there. My nanny got ill before the Great Patriotic War. There were polyp or something identified in her throat. My father gave Varia money to pay for a surgery. Varia loved me and my sister dearly. She never got married. My father helped her to receive a small room near the kitchen in an apartment on the 4th floor of the building where we lived. She died after the Great Patriotic War and we buried her.

There was a big double bed in the our room, some low table by an opposite wall and my sister's bed. There was a coach with a high back upholstered with black artificial leather where I slept. There was an oval table beside it. There was a partial to separate a corner for my mother's brother Meyer. There was a small stove. The window of our room faced a backyard where there was a shed

and garbage containers.