

Postcard Entitled Saturday Rest



I found this old post-card among my old photos. I don't remember where it comes from, there is nothing on the reverse side except for my childish scrawl.

I was learning to write then and scribbled the word 'Mama'. This post-card is called Saturday Rest, it depicts the Sabbath morning of a Jewish family.

Everybody is listening to what a young man is reading. We don't know what exactly he is reading, but looking at the placid faces and postures of the listeners we can conclude that it is something cordial.

My father, was not particularly religious. I don't remember him praying. Mum was from the family of a rabbi, so she did pray, but seldom went to synagogue, only on holidays when father used to join her.

All Jewish holidays were celebrated in our family. I especially remember Pesach. Mum was very skilful at cooking traditional Jewish meals. She prepared kosher food separately for herself and grandfather and non-kosher for Daddy and me. But we chose what was tastier, because only mother and granddad were Orthodox. Daddy and I didn't keep kosher, but liked delicious food.

On Jewish holidays relatives came to us. It was forbidden to celebrate any religious holidays then, but we had wonderful neighbors in our communal apartment, so we could rely on their keeping silence.

They never let us down, though they were completely different people in regard to age, origin, educational level and culture, but all of them were decent people.

With the children of some of them I still keep friendly relations, for example, with our neighbor Lilya, granddaughter of an Orthodox priest who had his parish somewhere in Shuvalovo.

He was put in prison in 1938 and perished somewhere in a camp. Among our neighbors, only one was Jewish. It was the family of our friend, whose father managed to exchange with one of our other neighbors and move to our apartment.

My parents were very amicable with this family. On New Year holidays all neighbors had decorated New Year trees, but it wasn't a Jewish tradition to have one, so we never had a fir-tree.