

Frieda Stoyanovskaya's Family



This is our family. From right to left : me, my mother, my husband Semyon Goldfine and our elder son, Victor. The photo was taken in Kiev in 1935. I was twenty when I got a job at a town school. I met my future husband then. It was at the home of Marusia Simanovich, my ex-co-student, where I was introduced to Semyon Goldfine who was almost 26. He was already a well-known journalist, had publications in the Soviet mass media and had a pseudonym. It was Semyon Moiseyevch Gordeyev. We got married in July 1931. Victor was born in 1933 and that was an awful period in our life, the period of collectivization and the 1933 famine in the Ukraine. The Soviet government took all the grain and bread away from the peasants and farmers to force them into joining the collective farms. This was called the 'state grain procurements'. My husband had to go to villages and describe these processes in the newspaper. He was a Soviet writer. His business trips to villages were very long. This work was not just psychologically hard, but also dangerous - the starved people hated those who were doing this to them and often fought for their bread and

families with pitchforks in their hands. Ukrainian villages were full of rumors about cannibalism. My husband returned from these trips morally depressed and physically ill. In Kiev or other bigger towns of Ukraine the situation was not so adverse. Townsfolk were getting rationed food. Our family also got rationed food. But I saw women dying from hunger in the streets. They were coming from villages but didn't get any help. This lasted until the end of 1934. Until 1934 we also got meals in the special canteen at the Regional Committee of the Communist Party. I took food for my family from there. This food supported our family and my mother. She was still working and also received rationed food. I also gave some food to my husband's mother - she wasn't working and couldn't earn her living. My sister Ida and her husband were in Donbass then. They managed, more or less. 1935-1936 was the time of repression [the so-called Great Terror]. They were chasing after the 'enemies of the people'. They didn't find any in my school. But in the Union of Soviet Writers arrests began in 1936. There was a rule that before a writer was arrested, they expelled him from the Party. My husband, Semyon Gordeyev, was Deputy First Secretary of the Communist Party Committee at the Union of Soviet Writers. He had to conduct these meetings. It was all so scary that he didn't tell me anything about them. The writers often committed suicide, knowing the procedure after they were expelled from the Party. Semyon suffered all his life for being involved in all this. He expected to be arrested, too. When we heard about the Great Patriotic War, the first thing that he said was, 'Thank God, they won't arrest me, and I will be killed on the front.' Arrests of the writers continued until the start of the war and afterwards. They happened almost every night and we were aware of them