

Boris Girshov's Father At His Working Place



This photograph was taken in Usvyaty in 1920s at my father's working place: regional consumers union.

After abolition of NEP, Daddy worked in the regional consumers union. [The regional consumers union was a special structure for purchasing agricultural products from peasants.]

At first he worked as a storekeeper, and later he was engaged in acceptance of grain which peasants handed over to the Government according to Food Tax. [In the Soviet Union Food Tax was raised from peasants in 1921-1923.]

Father was uneducated, therefore I had to help him in drawing up reports, making calculations, etc.

Father was an indisputable authority for me. First of all he wanted me to become a great guy. In conditions of our town he taught me everything, including riding a horse. He spurred me to go in for sports:

I became a first-grade gymnast. Father didn't pinch pennies on my studies the violin: I took lessons at professional teacher. Father showed me to professional musicians who came to our small town for vacation.

Daddy loved classical music very much, he played the violin himself, and was happy that I learned to play the violin, too. My brother Arkady also had musical abilities and father was very pleased to know that Arkady (when a little boy) got a prize at the amateur art contest.

Father sent me to the Jewish school. In addition to it I studied at cheder to acquire knowledge of Judaism, to be able to pray. Father was a real Jew and tried to accustom me to Jewish Tradition. He always observed Tradition at home.

Daddy dreamed that my brother would become a violinist, and his dream came true. Jewish melodies always moved him to tears. I remember him to be very pleased when I learnt to play some Jewish melodies.

Father used to invite his friends, send for me (I was always playing football somewhere in the street) and ask me to play melodies chosen by him.

Parents arranged bar mitzvah for me, but not for my brother: he was too little for the ceremony when parents left Usvyaty for evacuation.

Daddy died in 1943 in Kuibyshev [now Samara] of tuberculosis where he took his family for evacuation in the beginning of the war.

As soon as the war burst out, father brought his family to the railway station and got aboard the train to Kuibyshev.

He saved us, because soon Usvyaty was occupied by Germans and all local Jews were killed.