

Grigoriy Golod With His Friends



This is me with some friends on the bank of the Dnieper River. I am on the very left wearing a dark shirt. The photo was taken by a friend of mine on 11th June 1941. I had many Ukrainian and Russian friends. In the schools where I studied the last years of my education there were only a few Jewish children, and I didn't select friends on the basis of nationality. My friends and I attended an aviation club where we made replicas of airplanes that we set off on Trukhanov island on the Dnipro River. I was also fond of football and liked to go to football matches. Sometimes my father bought me a ticket, but when I had no ticket I joined a bunch of friends and we managed to get into the stadium without tickets. My friends and I also went to parades on 1st May and 7th November, the anniversary of the October Revolution. After parades we went to dance clubs. I dreamed of going to university after finishing school, but my mother was often ill and couldn't work and my father distanced himself from the family. My older brother, David, was a mechanic at the telephone station, and I got a job as a courier at the district financial department. I was to deliver receipts and subpoenas, and I enjoyed my work. I met with my friends afterwards and always had my dinner waiting for me on the table, covered with a white napkin, when I came home from work. In 1939 my mother died. After my mother died I began to look for a better-paid job. I became an apprentice to a lathe mechanic at the 43rd Aviation Plant. I commuted to work by tram. At that time one could be severely punished for being late for work. Public transportation was overcrowded, so I often went hanging on the rear of a tram. I got a good salary. Although my relationship with my father was tense, I gave him a part of my salary for my sisters' food. He bought me boots and a suit from my first salary. I had friends at the plant. Lyonia Kornin, my co-worker, introduced me to his friends. They were four Russian men, including Lyonia, one Jewish man and four Jewish girls: the sisters Ida, Genia, Sonia and Mirrah Geihtman. We often got together at the sisters' home. Their old hunchbacked mother enjoyed seeing us and often treated us to some food. We drank a little beer or wine, played cards and dominoes, had tea and sweets and went to a discotheque. That's how I met Mirrah Geihtman, my future wife. Her father perished during the Civil War. She came from a Jewish family, but they weren't religious. They only spoke Russian and didn't observe any traditions. I liked Mirrah a lot, but her mother didn't really want me to be Mirrah's friend. I guess, she wanted a wealthy fiancé for her daughter while I, in her opinion, was poor and didn't deserve

her daughter. We liked going to the cinema and watched all popular Soviet movies of the time.