

Alfred Liberman, His Aunt Vera Liberman And Uncle Yevsey Liberman



Here is a family snapshot from 1948. I am in the middle, with my aunt Vera Grigoryevna Liberman on the left and my uncle Yevsey Grigoryevich Liberman on the right. 1948. We look sad because the picture taken at the funeral of my father, their brother. My aunt Vera Grigoryevna was a lovely person. She was born in 1890 in the town of Sudilkov. Her teacher at the Kiev Medical Institute was the then famous Professor Pisemsky. She worked as a gynecologist in Kiev and during the war worked in the Urals. She got married a year before the war. To the great surprise of our secular family, Vera's wedding ceremony was traditionally Jewish, with a rabbi, chupah [a canopy put over the bride and a groom during the wedding ceremony], and freilachs [a Jewish folk dance]. Vera's husband died in the first months of the Second World War. Aunt Vera's death was tragic and absurd ? she fell down in her own flat after getting entangled in the flap of her bathrobe; she broke her femur, and died some time later from her injury. I don't remember the exact date of her death. Uncle Yevsey was born in 1897 and graduated from Kiev University. From 1923 he worked in Kharkov. He created an economic school famous all over the country. Later, his lectures, articles and speeches drew the attention of the highest Soviet leadership; he won support from prime ministers Khrushchev and then Kosygin. An article titled 'Plan, Profit, Prize' that he published in 'Pravda' [the main newspaper of the USSR] in 1962 touched off a whole discussion among economists, while his line of reforms, supported by the leadership of the USSR, was nicknamed 'Libermanization' in the West. The journalist Mark Geiler called my uncle a 'leader' in the new Soviet economy and devoted a big article with photos of his meeting with Yevsey Liberman in his flat in Kharkov. This article was published in the French «Paris Match» magazine (March 1966). My famous uncle died in 1984. Many economists say today that the basis for the liberalization of the economy in 1990s was missing the input of Yevsey Liberman ? the 'father of the reforms' of the 1960s and the head of the Kharkov school of economists.