

Grigorii Shkolnikov's Naval Correspondence

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This is a naval letter of Grigorii Abramovich Shkolnikov, whom I married in 1955. He was an officer who finished among the best at the Pacific Ocean Naval Academy and obtained a post on a submarine in the north. When he was 25 he was removed from his post because of his Jewish background. He wrote to the Central Committee of the Communist Party, and the same committee that forced him to leave the submarine offered him a position on a minesweeping trawler, where he quickly became the navigator of the flagship and spent 468 days clearing mines in the Baltic Sea. He received a medal 40 years later 'for battling mines.' After my husband's demobilization, we returned to Leningrad. I worked as an engineer, and Grisha worked in the construction bureau of the Svetlana factory. In 1987 he was accused of being a Zionist - at that time in the group there were five Jews and one was planning to leave for Israel - and Grisha was forced to leave Svetlana. I was born in Tashkent. My grandparents fled there from Ekaterinodar, which is now Dnepropetrovsk,



Ukraine, because of pogroms. When I was 6, my mother was widowed. My father, Boris Nekrasov, was a graduate student and had been exempted from army service. However, during the first days of the war in 1941, he volunteered for the front and was killed in battle on January 23, 1943. My mother was 24. She was left with not only with me, but also with her mother and paralyzed father. I was brought up by my stepfather, Mikhail Rafilovich Rubanenko - a person of high moral qualities and intellect. I began to call him Papa when my little sister, Natasha, was born on August 19, 1947.