

Alexander Grin With His Parents Raisa And Moisey Grin



From left to right: my mother Raisa Grin, nee Liberman, me and my father Moisey Grin. My parents kept this photograph. They took it along with a few other things they packed for evacuation and had it with them, when they returned to Moscow. I have this photograph now.

This photo was taken on my third birthday in 1927 in the Leonidov photo shop in Moscow.

My father was born in Rostov-on-Don in 1899. He finished school and got attracted by revolutionary ideas. During the Civil War he served in the political department of the 2nd Red army cavalry unit. My mother and father met, when Red army troops entered Rostov.

My mother and father never told me any details about how they met, though they actually actively communicated with us. My mother also took some part in revolutionary activities, though not as passionately as my father. He was an active member of the Communist Party, though he quit during the period of the NEP because of his disagreement with the policy of the party.

He did it quietly and there were no consequences of this for him. This episode was never discussed in the family because if people quit the party for ideological reasons they might have been sent to camps. During perestroika my father told me the story.

My parents didn't have a religious wedding. They belonged to the generation that made the Revolution and their position was to reject the significance of nationality. They believed that a person should be a revolutionary and internationalist and rejected religion or traditions. No nationality or tradition-related issues were ever discussed in our family and there was no orientation of our Jewish identity.

My father began to get involved in journalism in Rostov, but there were no career opportunities for him and my parents moved to Moscow in 1924. My father began to work as chief editor of a trade union magazine. He was about 30 years old then. At that time my father changed his surname to Grin.

My mother was an intelligent, well-educated person, though she had only one official document about finishing a grammar school. She studied at university, but never graduated from it and didn't have any documents proving her higher education.

She sang very well and attended evening classes at the conservatory before the war, but she never reached a professional level. She had no time having to raise two children. She was a statistics economist. She worked in the institute of figurative statistics. My mother was a wonderful person. She was my most loved and beautiful person. She spent a lot of time with my sister and me.

I was born in December 1924. My parents had two rooms in a communal apartment: my mother and father shared one room and my nanny and I lived in the other.

My nanny's name was Nadezhda, but everybody called her 'nanny' since she was the oldest sister in her family in a village raising her younger brothers and sisters. My nanny was like a member of our family. She came to work for us, when I was a few months old and raised me, my younger sister and my son.